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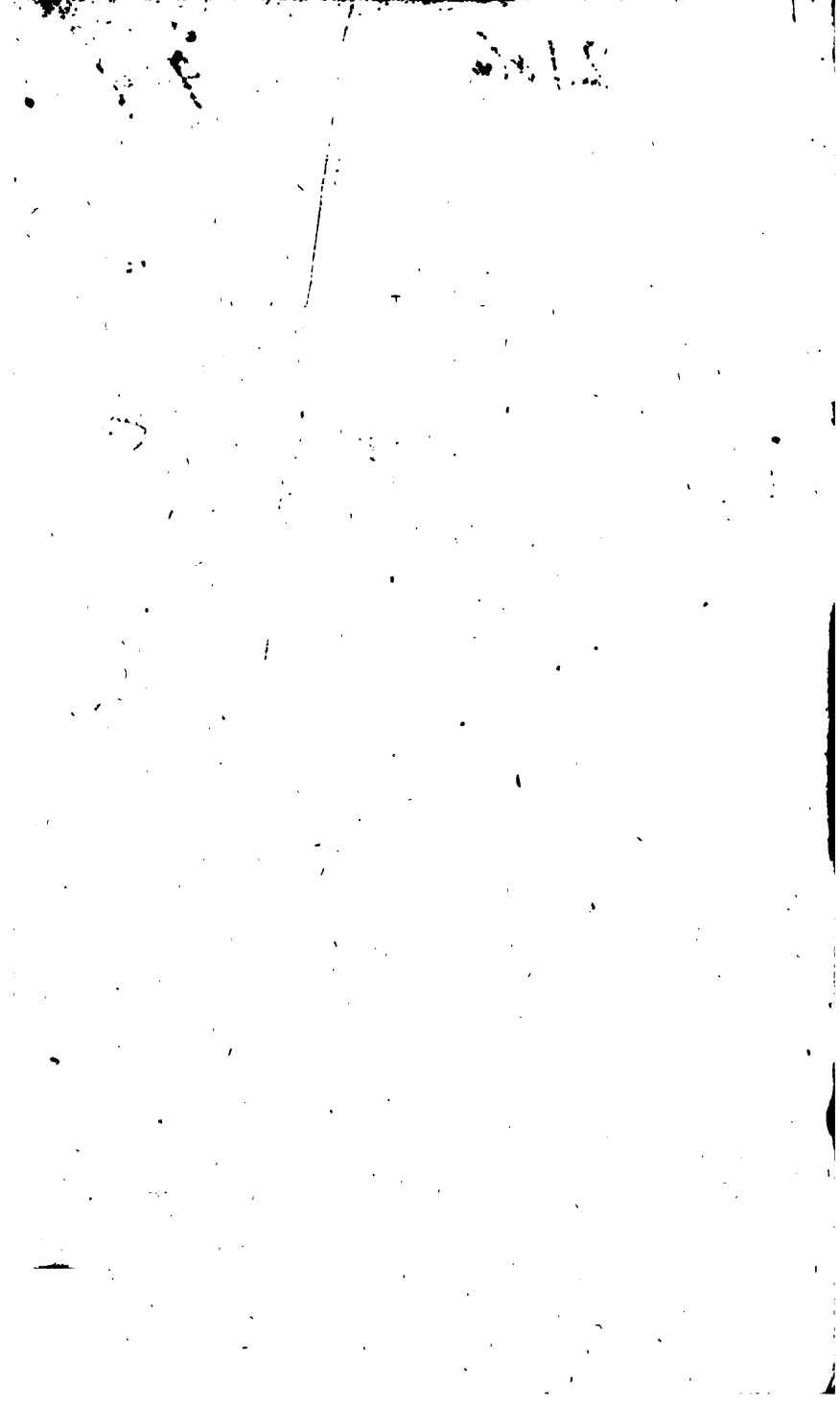
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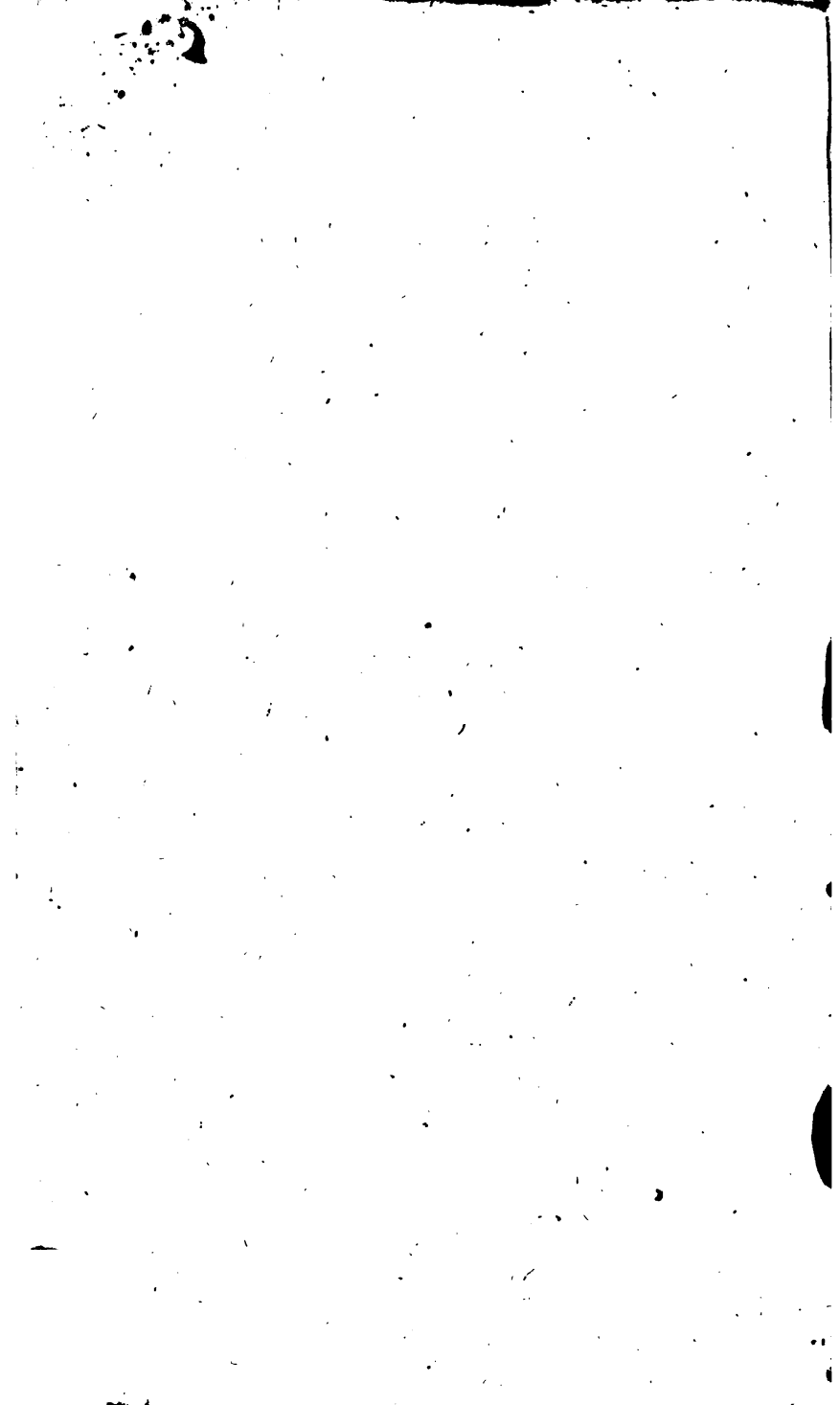
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THE 32292
HISTORY
OF
IRELAND;

FROM THE
Earliest Authentic Accounts,
to the Year 1171:

SINCE
Which Period it has been annexed
to the CROWN of ENGLAND.

WITH A
PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION
on the Antient and Present State and Condi-
tion of that KINGDOM.

and 1703-1768
By FERD^o. WARNER, L.L.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

Printed for JAMES WILLIAMS, at
No. 5, in *Skinner-Row*.

MDCCLXX.

T O

THE KING.

S I R,

IN a former Work, which I presented to Your Majesty, and which You did me the Honour graciously to receive, the fashionable Mode of Address—so foreign from the original classical Simplicity—was not the style of the Dedication ; and the same motives, SIR, which withheld me from it at that time, will withhold me from it for ever. For I dare not presume to pay so ill a Compliment to Your Majesty, as to suppose it necessary to proclaim Your Virtues to the world, or to inform Your Majesty of the veneration with which the world beholds them.

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But

But I hope, SIR, You will permit me to pursue the true design of a Dedication, by giving Your Majesty some account of the Work, which I have the honour now to lay before You, and by entreating Your Majesty's acceptance of it.—The whole Work, intended, SIR, is a general history of Ireland from the earliest records of time, to the final settlement of that country, at the close of the last century, by King WILLIAM. But, SIR, the particular business of these Volumes, after a full account of the ancient and present state of Ireland, civil and ecclesiastical, are to illustrate the great exploits of some of Your Majesty's Royal Ancestors, Monarchs of that Island, and to serve the cause of liberty by an instructive history of the consequences of its abuse. To whom then, SIR, could I address myself for a patronage of this Work, with so much propriety, as to Your Majesty? Your Majesty's patronage, indeed, it is well known, will always be

DEDICATION. v

be an honour to any Work, and a protection to any Writer; and may therefore be solicited on all occasions very properly.

But this, SIR, is a Work, which not only exposes the fatal politicks of early ages, and so will throw a lustre on Your Majesty's happy reign, but which also traces out in the course of it Your Majesty's own descent from a line of illustrious Heroes: And tho' the crown of Ireland hath been annexed to the diadem which Your Majesty wears, for almost six hundred years, yet these Heroes, SIR, are but little, or not at all, known or heard of in your native Country. Your native Country, permit me, GREAT SIR, to say, remarkable as it is for good sense and benevolence, looks rather with an eye of prejudice and contempt on that deserving province;—a province of far greater importance and utility to this nation, than almost all the other provinces together in the whole British empire:

vi DEDICATION.

empire : And when Your Majesty is informed that no general history, either edifying or impartial, of that great branch of your dominions is already extant, I flatter myself that the whole Work which I have undertaken will be agreeable to Your Majesty, and attract Your notice.

The whole undertaking, SIR, it must be allowed, is very arduous, and the execution of it must necessarily be painful and expensive. But convinced, SIR, as I am, that the service of the Publick is every man's real duty, no discouragements of any kind have prevented my performing it, to the best of my abilities, on all occasions that have fallen in my way. Knowing therefore, SIR, the very imperfect, or rather the false idea that we Britons have conceived of Ireland, and the prejudice which many of its natives have entertained of some revolutions in their government, it appeared to me that such a history was equally necessary
and

DEDICATION. vii

and beneficial to all Your Majesty's subjects : as such I undertook it, and as such I hope I shall be enabled to complete it.

To the consideration of Your Majesty it is now submitted ; and happy shall I esteem myself if it meets with that approbation from Your Majesty, which Your great benevolence inclines You to bestow on all undertakings of utility to the Publick.

That your Majesty may long, very long, continue to be a blessing to all Your People, and that all Your People may persevere in their loyalty and affection to so Great and Good a King, is the ardent prayer of, S I R,

Your Majesty's most dutiful,

most devoted subject,

FERDINANDO WARNER.

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P R E F A C E.

IN gathering up materials for the Ecclesiastical History of England, which I had the honour to give the publick about six years ago, it was necessary to have recourse to the Irish History; as a great part of this Kingdom owed its first instructions in Christianity to the pious labours and learning of Divines from Ireland. But after many enquiries, and much search, I found, to my great surprize, that there was no tolerable History of Ireland extant, either in that country or in this. By what fatality it had happened, that such a work had been hitherto so much neglected, or, to speak more properly, abandoned by men of letters, I did not know. But it appeared to me to be a Work which was capable of affording great entertainment and much knowledge; such as would be honourable to Ireland, and useful to the world. That was evidently, however, the only country now in Europe, which is in itself so good a subject for history, from its situation, importance, natural advantages, and inhabitants, and for which such authentic materials are to be met with, that in this age of literature is without its complete and general history; without such a history as a man of sense can study with any profit, or even read with any pleasure.

The native Irish writers, of which KEATING stands at the head, have confined themselves entirely to the ancient part of the History, before the English acquired any settlement in that country.

But they all betray so much vanity, and deal so much in the fabulous, as gives an air of romance to the whole ; or, to speak of it in the most favourable and candid terms, as makes it appear to be a mythological rather than a real history. O FLAHERTY, in a Latin work, which he calls *Ogygia*, has rejected many of the romantic tales adopted by other writers, and has taken infinite pains to adjust the chronology of their high antiquities ; in which he has in a good measure succeeded. For his technical chronology, though not absolutely accurate, is, however, the most accurate of any we know in Europe. The reader need not be told that it can only be ascertained, as Sir I. NEWTON in a great degree ascertained his, by the generations of men and the reigns of Princes. The Latin performance of Archdeacon LYNCH, published under the title of “*Cambrensis everfius*,” though it contains some curious particulars of old Irish affairs, yet it is principally taken up in refuting the false and malevolent assertions of GERALD, Bishop of St. David’s, called, “*Cambrensis*.” But the best work that hath appeared on the ancient part of the Irish history, are the *Dissertations* on it, published lately by Mr. O CONNOR, a gentleman of the County of Roscommon : who has had ingenuoufness and honesty enough, however, to own to me, that more than the common disadvantages, to which a first publication on a dark subject is exposed, glare through the whole ; neither could he answer for it, but that the warmth of youth, and the “*Amor Patriæ*,” might have inclined him to extend the matter somewhat beyond the rigour, to which he should have confined himself. This acknowledgment, though it flows from a true greatness of mind, which does him honour, yet shews us, that this work is to be read with caution, and some grains of allowance for prejudice and

and partiality; neither is it any thing more than what the title professes, "Dissertations on the Ancient History." Among the Irish writers of English extract and descent, who are to be distinguished from the natives, the first place must be given to Sir JAMES WARE; who had great opportunities, from a long residence in that country, and a post of eminence in the State, to make himself acquainted with its history and antiquities; and his work on that subject is almost the only book of the kind that has been ever read or heard of in this age in England. But though it must be owned that this writer was indefatigable in his collections, yet being a man of no great taste or genius, being ignorant of the language in which his materials were composed, and having no good interpreters who understood both that and the English, he was imposed upon not a little; and consequently the world has been misled by him. For instance, he hath cut off at a single stroke fourteen hundred years of the ancient history, by asserting roundly contrary to authentic evidence, that whatever was recorded of the times before Christianity, was nothing else but the invention of latter ages. Even in the History which he pretends to give of the times posterior to that æra, we meet with nothing but a dry meagre catalogue of their Kings, through a space of almost eight hundred years; as though nothing worthy attention was transacted in all that period. In short, though WARE had great merit in bringing forth from old fragments, which had lain neglected, many materials essential to Irish history, yet, whosoever contents himself with that production—even improved as it is by HARRIS—will have a very insufficient, and a very partial idea of the ancient state of Ireland.

Archbishop USHER, as good and as honest a man as ever lived, wore out a long life in the

most painful researches into antiquity ; but they were chiefly confined to chronological and ecclesiastical subjects. Little else, however, relating to Ireland is to be found among his writings : and as far as it extends on the heads of Religion and the Church of the ancient Irish, his matter is accurate and authentic ; but he also laboured under the disadvantage of bad interpreters. As to all the English writers who have attempted to give any part of the History of Ireland—such as CAMBRENSIS, CAMPION, HANMER, STANTHURST, SPENCER, MORRISON, COX, &c.—it is difficult to determine whether they shew more inaccuracy and ignorance, or malevolence and partiality. Sir RICHARD COX is the only one who hath attempted a general history from the conquest, extended to modern times : and the reader will find much the same entertainment and instruction, by perusing the old news papers, in which the facts and events were originally recorded, as he would by looking over that history.

To enumerate or expose all the ill-grounded assertions of these several writers, with regard to the ancient history and inhabitants of the Irish nation, and which they have indulged through inattention, partiality, or malevolence, would be no difficult task, though very disagreeable and impertinent to my design. My design here is only to shew, in what a low and wretched condition the history of Ireland—a kingdom appendant to our own for almost six hundred years past—hath hitherto remained, to the disgrace of letters, and the reproach of both nations. It may be proper, however, to mention, that one notorious error runs through all the English writers on this subject, and another through all the Irish. The first in their description of the ancient inhabitants, customs, and manners, speak of them 'till the conquest, in the same opprobrious terms which suit them
only

only in their pristine state, when they were utterly unacquainted with agriculture, arts, and commerce, when letters were in their infancy, and when the whole world was lying in ignorance. On the other hand the Irish writers, when they speak of their Milesian ancestors, pass most of this by in silence; and talk of nothing but a succession of illustrious Princes, the splendour of their laws and government, and in short of a politeness, virtue, military glory, and generosity, which distinguished their nation from all other. Both these accounts may be said perhaps to be true; and yet for want of making the distinction, when the first ended, and the last began, they are neither of them impartial.

The many probable reasons why no writer of Ireland hath attempted to rescue its history from this condition, may be easily enough assigned. Of the old Irish Stock, who understand the language in which the fragments that remain are written, few have had an education which makes them capable of writing in any other: nor would one of them be induced, I believe, to give himself any trouble about the history of Ireland, beyond the dissolution of their monarchy; when all their splendour, as a warlike, free, and independent people, became extinguished. Even of the part prior to it, they content themselves with what hath been already published by the authors before mentioned—though many other authorities of very ancient date, besides what are taken notice of by them, are still in the hands of the curious—because of the contempt which they see these works are held in by the English there, as well as here; and because of the expence, too great for private persons, of collecting, explaining, and publishing these fragments; which, after all, perhaps not fifty people in both kingdoms would have curiosity or inclination

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enough

enough to peruse. This, by the way, is one answer to all those who ask, why none of the learned in Ireland, skilled in the original language, have published any authentic historical monuments of their country from their very ancient annals.

If these conjectures are sufficient to account for the silence and inactivity of the few of the Irish stock who are capable of writing history, as I think they are, then we cannot be at a loss for a reason, why no man of letters in Ireland, of the English race, hath made any attempt to illustrate and defend their ancient history. But besides what hath been said already as a discouragement from it, the people of English extraction, though their ancestors have been in possession of it almost six hundred years, yet, by a strange kind of reasoning, don't look upon Ireland as their country; and therefore pay no more regard to its antiquities, than they do those of China or Japan. Other reasons however must be sought for, why none of the English there, who have distinguished themselves in all other kinds of learning, should ever yet have attempted to give such a general history of Ireland, since it became annexed to the crown of England, as is given of every other nation and state almost in Europe.

The subject, it must be owned, is interesting, from its importance, its novelty, the situation of the island, and its connection with a kingdom so powerful and so flourishing as this of ours. Even in this period, the reason which has been given in the preceding paragraph will hold good, though not so strongly: for though to be born themselves in Ireland, and to enjoy estates and emoluments from father to son through several generations will make it their own country, or one does not know what will, yet the inhabitants of the English race at this day have their eye and inclination rather fixed on Eng-
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land as their country ; and there is reason to think, generally speaking, that Ireland should be more the object of their love and attention than they are pleased to make it. It is with the utmost reluctance, because I really wish not to offend, that I have mentioned this as a reason, why no care hath been taken to give the world such a general history of their nation under the English government, as should be edifying, important, and entertaining : and if truth was not superior with me to all other considerations, I would suppress as another reason, that the people of Ireland in general, 'till within these few years, were the least lovers of books, and spent the least time in reading, of any civilized people perhaps under the sun [a].

But another reason, and probably the most important, is yet behind. Though there are numerous and authentic materials for history during this period to be found in Ireland, among the rolls and journals of parliament, among the acts and orders of council, among the records of state and the rolls of chancery, as well as in the public and private libraries, yet a much greater number remained in England ; in the council and secretaries offices, in the Museum and the tower, in the Bodleian and Lambeth libraries, and in the cabinets of the curious. For a man of letters therefore in Ireland, to come over to this country, and to remain in it so long as to inspect all these materials and make extracts from them—even supposing his access to them to be made ever so easy—would be a very troublesome undertaking ; and much too expensive to be engaged in on his own account, or for the small price which is paid for literary compositions.

Whether these which I have now assigned are the

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true

[a] A letter, which I was honoured with from a late learned Irish Prelate, is my authority for this assertion.

true and only reasons, why no writer of Ireland hath hitherto attempted to rescue its history from that disgraceful and wretched condition in which it lies, I will not take upon me to determine. I must own that they appear to me very sufficient for that purpose; and the reader must allow that they are highly probable. Indeed they appear to be so very sufficient, that upon a review of what has been said, I am not without apprehension it will be thought great presumption in me—a stranger to the language and country of Ireland—to attempt the arduous Work of writing its general history. The reader however is desired to suspend his judgment, 'till he has seen what is to be said in justification of this attempt, as well as the steps taken for carrying it into execution with success.

It may be remembered that I have said already in the beginning, that upon the strictest search into the history of Ireland, which I was necessarily obliged to make, I had found there was nothing tolerable of that kind extant; and yet that it appeared a work which was capable of affording great entertainment and much knowledge. Led by these observations to talk over the subject of Irish history with several of the first distinction in that Kingdom resident in England, I found them not more concerned at the pitiful obscure state of it, than desirous that I would write a new general history from the earliest records of time: nor did they fail to give me encouragement, by promises of their countenance and best assistance in the undertaking.

From the various conversations which I had on this subject with men of letters and taste in my own country, and from the histories of Ireland which had been published here, it appeared to me that the people of England of all ranks, generally speaking, had either no other knowledge of that Kingdom, then that it was an island subject to

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Great Britain; or, what is worse than no knowledge, they had got the falsest notions, and conceived the strongest contempt and most groundless prejudices, that ever filled the heads, or entered the hearts of one civilized people about another. Who would think then, if they did not know it, that the literary amusement of men of politeness, which of late years has been most in fashion—and one wonders it should be so long neglected—hath been the history of all the countries upon the globe? This is a circumstance which will obviate one of the discouragements to a work of this kind in Ireland above-mentioned: but it is principally taken notice of in this place to shew, how very shameful and absurd it is to take pains to know as much as we can of the history of every other nation, and at the same time to be utter strangers to that which belongs to ourselves, and which may not improperly be called our own. This is an evident proof, I think, of the reasonableness and the necessity of the present work. Besides, tho' the history of Ireland—to use the words of Lord BOLINGBROKE—"will contribute extremely to keep our minds free from a ridiculous partiality in favour of our own country, and a vicious prejudice against others, yet it will create in us a preference of affection towards our own."

Convinced as I was from these considerations of the truth of what had been said to me by a person of an eminent station in that country, "that there was no one point of literature so much wanted in England as a good Irish history," the difficulties which attended it did not affright me. I had experienced the patience and industry which it requires, to dig in the rubbish and obscurity of ancient authors, covered with the rust of time and involved in fable and tradition: and if any conclusion was to be drawn from the approbation given to my
Church

Church History, by those whose approbation was a sufficient proof of the merit of any work, I might conclude without arrogance, that I had judgment enough to discern, what is fit to be told, and what to be let alone; and above all, that I was possessed of candour and impartiality, which it can be no vanity to boast of, because in an historian it is the greatest vice to want them.

These several circumstances induced me, I hope not unreasonably, to undertake the general history of Ireland: and as soon as I was determined, I employed a great deal of time and was at much expence for some years, in collecting all the books that had been published, both in England and in Ireland, which directly or indirectly related to this subject. They were all as open to me, as to any Irish writer; and as much a stranger as I was to the language and the country, the same application would make me master of their contents, being none of them written in Irish. My situation, moreover, would give me an advantage with regard to the manuscripts, records and collections here in England; which an historian of that nation, without residing here for a long time, could not obtain, nor make use of.

The only obstruction that stood in my way, were the manuscript materials in the public offices and libraries of Ireland yet untouched; and which were all of them as important as they were authentic. To remove this obstruction as well as I could, I addressed a letter to the nobility and gentry of Ireland, published twice in the Dublin Journal in May 1761, copies of which I sent to every Irish Peer in this country—informing them of my undertaking, and entreating their assistance in it. In particular, I presumed to make a request to the Dublin Society, for all those papers that had been collected towards a general history by Mr. HARRIS,
of

of which the Irish house of commons had granted money for the purchase, a few years before. The Dublin Society, the most respectable body of men in that Kingdom, next the Parliament, many of which are its members, held an extraordinary board at the request of the Earl of CLANBRASSIL to consider of that application : at this board it was agreed that his Lordship should be wrote to, to let me know, " that as a general history of Ireland was much desired by that society, and they could not remit their manuscripts without an order of the house of commons, so if I would go over thither, they would make me a present towards the expences of my journey, and I should have free access to all the papers in their possession, and every other assistance which they could give to my undertaking : " nor did they omit to suggest the great advantage of such an expedition, in furnishing myself with all the other materials that were to be found in Dublin.

Upon this invitation and encouragement, and in order to make the work as complete as possible—notwithstanding the infirmities of a very gouty constitution—I went over at the meeting of their Parliament in sixty-one. The Dublin Society, as I expected, kept their word : and as the late Mr. HARRIS, in those collections which they had purchased, had copied all the Records in the Birmingham Tower and the Rolls of Chancery necessary to my undertaking, a great deal of time and trouble were saved me in the pursuit of them. The Provost and Fellows of Trinity College were so kind as to dispense with the statutes that concerned their manuscripts in my favour ; and to accommodate me for several weeks in the perusal of them in a very unprecedented handsome manner. — To the private thanks which I then gave to these two learned bodies,

bodies, I beg leave to add my publick acknowledgments in this place.

The books in the Council Office were a source of excellent materials for Irish history, which no one before me had ever had recourse to for that purpose; and by the polite behaviour of the clerks, and the labour of Dr. LYON, Prebendary of St. Patrick's, who had made a general catalogue, and an index to every volume, my time for some weeks was spent there very agreeably, and my trouble greatly lessened. The public library at St. Sepulchre's did not abound with manuscripts useful or important to a general history; but such as were there I had free access to.

The kind and courteous treatment of the Marquis of Kildare; the free and condescending manner in which the Lord Viscount JOCELYN was pleased to honour me with his information and his papers; the zeal and friendship of the good Bishop of WATERFORD in every instance where they could be of use; the polite and good-natured reception and advice of the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons;—the civility of the Earl of CHESTERFIELD, here at home, in accommodating me with some books which I could not otherwise procure; the alacrity and kindness with which the Earl of BESSBOROUGH encouraged the undertaking; the singular generosity of the Lord Viscount FITZWILLIAM; and the many friendly assistances of the Lord Viscount MIDDLETON; these all deserve the best and most public acknowledgments in my power to make: and I hope that the private friends which I found at Dublin, though their names are not mentioned, will not think themselves slighted nor their favours forgot. What other obligations in the progress of this undertaking I may have to the great and learned, both in that country and in this, it shall be my care particularly to mention;

tion : and when I consider that the best regulated and politest states, have always looked upon works of this kind as worthy of their encouragement, and that anciently such encouragement was more conspicuous in Ireland than any where else, I am not without hopes, that in the present age of knowledge and improvement in that country, the history which I shall deliver, will be thought worthy of the attention of the whole Irish nation, as well as of this in which I write. It would be cruel that its impartiality should give offence to either.

Having laid before the reader, in a manner void of all artifice, the several reasons which induced me to attempt this arduous undertaking, and the steps which have been taken for executing it with success, it is necessary that I should say something now particularly of this volume ; which contains the Introduction, and the whole ancient History, from the earliest accounts of time, to the dissolution of the monarchy at the English conquest. Of the Introduction, I shall only say, that, imperfect as it may be, it has cost me more pains than can be well conceived : it may be called not improperly a political map of Ireland in its ancient and present state ; and if I had compiled it only from the books, even of modern composition, which relate to that country, without going over thither myself, it would not only have been very defective, but many erroneous accounts must have been also given, which have been copied, and still continue to be copied, from one writer by another, to the present time. It may be said of it, I believe, now, that it is at least free from error. It has been submitted to the inspection of several of the nobility and gentry of that kingdom, whose approbation it hath been honoured with ; and should any

any errors still remain, they are not committed with a design to misinform or mislead the reader.

With regard to the several periods of the antient history, comprehended in this volume, if the primæval accounts of Ireland are found to be buried in the same obscurity and confusion with those of other countries, it is no more than might be expected. Their probable, if not their certain accounts, however, are to be carried higher than those of most other nations in Europe, or than we in England chuse to allow; as it is evidently proved, I think, in the following work, to which I refer. A great distinction, no doubt, is to be made, in all the ancient historical monuments of the northern nations, between the accounts they give of their antiquities, before the times in which they became cultivated, and received the use of letters, and the accounts they give of their history, since the Period when letters were received amongst them.

Accordingly, the reader will find little stress laid on the uncertainty of tradition, in the times prior to those in which they had the use of letters; and even after that period, if we are obliged to strip off a great deal of fable from the materials which have been handed down, this is no more than what must be done with all other ancient profane history in the world. The circumstance to be most lamented with regard to the old Irish history, is, that the Danes, in their frequent ravages and invasions of Ireland, during the ninth and tenth centuries, burnt all the books and monuments of antiquity that fell in their way; and that what they had spared, or which were afterwards compiled, went to wreck when the English took possession of the Island, and in the many wars which they had for above two hundred years with the natives. Instead therefore of wondering at the want there is now, and for some ages hath been, of antient histories amongst

amongst the Irish, it is rather to be wondered at that they have any manuscripts or records at all remaining.

It must be owned, indeed, that a notion hath prevailed amongst them of late, from the report of a Danish gentleman, that their manuscripts and records were not all destroyed, but that a great collection in the Irish language and character was now to be found in the library of the King of Denmark. This report, I perceived, when I was at Dublin, had made a great impression upon many of the learned Irish; who, considering that the Danes received Christianity, and of course some taste for letters in the tenth century, entertained great hopes of an acquisition to their antient history from these manuscripts.

Though from the manners of the northern nations, during their piratical wars with Ireland, even after they became Christians, I doubted much, if they took any pains to preserve the monuments of history in the Irish archives, yet that I might leave no measures untried, to procure materials so authentic—if any such there were—I entreated his Grace the Duke of NEWCASTLE, who very obligingly complied with my request, to recommend an enquiry after them to Mr. TITLEY, the British envoy at that court. On Mr TITLEY's application to his Danish Majesty, orders were issued for a search into all parts of the library, the archives and the cabinets of the literati, but without effect; as the reader will see from Baron BERNSTORFF's letter below, which I was favoured with from Mr. TITLEY [a]. This letter will obviate any further hopes

[a] Monsieur, à Copenhague, le 1 d'Avril, 1762.

C'est à regret que je suis obligé de vous marquer, que malgré nos recherches il ne s'est trouvé, ni dans les archives

hopes or expectations from that quarter : and the publick may rest assured, that the Danes carried none of the Irish manuscripts out of the island, but destroyed them all upon the spot ; as before this report, had always been supposed. Some further light, however, might be thrown upon the antient history, if I had succeeded in another application that I made for a manuscript of **SEBULLIUS**, a Spanish Bishop, and a native of Ireland in the eighth century ; which had been in the hands of Sir **JOHN HIGGINS**, Physician to **PHILIP V.** But a recovery of this work was found impracticable. Nor was I more successful in many repeated attempts to procure the papers relating to that period of the late **Dr. RAYMOND**, mentioned in the Introduction. Why they were withheld from me, against the consent of his son's widow, and his grandson, his legal heirs and representatives, is best known to Mr **ENRAGHT**, a clergyman in the county of Carlow, to whom I am informed they had been lent.

After what has been said of the destruction of the antient histories and records by the Danes and English, the reader will certainly be ready to ask, upon what authority then it is that any antient history, prior to these invasions, hath been founded

archives du Roi, ni parmi les manuscrits de sa bibliothèque, ni dans aucun autre cabinet de nos Scavants, des pieces qui eussent rapport à l'histoire ancienne d'Irlande, où qui pussent servir à l'ouvrage que le **Dr. WARNER** se propose de publier. Sa Majesté en est tres fachée, & j'ose dire, que je le suis aussi.

Je souhaite etre plus heureux dans un autre occasion, & je vou, prie d'etre toujours tres persuadé de l'empressement avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monseigneur,

A Monsieur Titled, Envoyé
Extraordinaire de S. M. Bri-
tannique près du Roi.

Vôtre tres humble et
tres obeissant serviteur,
BERNSTORFF.

founded and given. As puzzling a question as this may be thought, it is easily to be answered, and answered with truth. The records of all public transactions, from the beginning of the Milesian monarchy, had been carefully handed down by tradition, and in the sonnets of their bards: these were afterwards made so much the concern of the state in Ireland, when their Parliament was established, and so many copies were transcribed and preserved in their public registries; that such a great number of historical monuments were not again to be found perhaps in any other nation. The care of history was one of the first cares of the government; and from the larger works in the archives, now lost, and lost for ever, portable extracts were made, which were short, and therefore easily copied and circulated, as well as easily preserved through all revolutions.

Of such materials as these, the fragments that now remain, the annals, and poetical compositions principally consist. The greatest part of these have been translated and published by KEATING, O FLAHERTY, WARE, LYNCH, or Mr. O CONNOR; and they are the chief authorities which have been consulted in compiling the ancient history; as the reader will see in the margin at the beginning of every book [b]. Very early indeed, in my search after materials for this undertaking, I found and purchased a large historical manuscript of that period; wrote evidently by a native of Ireland, who understood the language, and who had had the inspection of most of the fragments mentioned by those writers. But from such short records as these, the characters of the principal persons who figured on the public stage, and the latent springs of action, which

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[b] The authorities in the Ninth Book, being the same as those in the Eighth, are, on that account, omitted.

are the soul of history, must not be looked for : they are only to be collected from the genius of the times, the ruling manners, and some striking circumstances, which afford a glimmering light through the darkness that surrounds them. Amidst a barrenness of such facts as best reward the labours of an historian, it is hoped that the reader will be so candid as not to expect any great entertainment or instruction. If I have separated truth from fable, omitted all impertinent trifles, and avoided the credulity and partiality of other writers of this period ; if I have dwelled principally upon those events, which are interesting to mankind in every age of the world ; and if the facts are ranged and connected with a tolerable precision, as well as enlivened with those reflections which answer the noblest end of history ; in short, if I make the best use of the matter I have, it is all that can reasonably be expected here : for the business of an historian is not to create matter, but to illustrate what he meets with, and to relate it truly ; and if it exhibits little more than a Picture of the outrages and distresses of mankind, it is not his fault, but the fault of the times and people of which he writes.

Of the manner in which I have acquitted myself in the several particulars above-mentioned, none of my readers however can form a judgment, but such as have perused the works already published of this period : and it will be very unjust that I should be condemned by other readers, for not giving them better matter, when better matter was not to be had. But yet broken, defective, and dry as the matter is, the antient history of Ireland given in these volumes, which may properly enough be called, the history of the abuse of liberty, is so edifying and

and important to a free people, as that few subjects merit their attention more, and scarcely any can afford instructions of greater political use. Were there no other circumstance attending it, than the continued infelicity of that kingdom, through a period of two thousand years, which is now the chief member of the British Empire, it would justly excite the curiosity of every person conversant in letters.

But there is a further circumstance to recommend this ancient history to our attention ; which is the great light it throws on the primæval accounts of Scotland, that hath given us Kings for an hundred and fifty years past, and is now united and in subjection to the crown of England. Were it not for the antient records preserved in Ireland, the whole first period of the Scottish history would be blank ; or quite enveloped in ignorance and barbarism. Accordingly the Scotch historians, for want of being acquainted with the language and writings of their mother country, have many of them given a fabulous, and the best of them a very imperfect and obscure account of their origin and antiquity. Should this volume therefore afford the reader no other instruction, it will shew him that Ireland was the parent country of the Scotch ; it will trace out the royal line of the sovereigns of Great Britain in its descent from the Irish monarchs ; it will give him an idea of the real origin, language, learning, and first constitution of government of those northern people ; it will set the honour and power of their antient nobility in their proper light ; and, in short, it will rescue their remote antiquities, from that obscurity and oblivion in which some of their own writers have involved them. As to those who are assuming or weak enough to insist on the his-

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torical truth of a poetical romance, lately picked up in fragments no body knows where, nor how preserved and handed down, in opposition to the whole tenour of the best histories of their own country, as well as those of Ireland, they merit no confutation. Upon the whole, need any thing further to be suggested, in order to convince the reader, that this antient part of the Irish history, is edifying to Britons and a proper object of their attention? I think verily there does not.

But before I conclude, it may be necessary to observe, that there is some difficulty in understanding the high antiquities of the Irish nation, from the very different manner in which the names of Monarchs, Princes and places, are spelled and written by different authors. These names originally were Celtic; and growing into disuse in process of time with the generality, the modern writers have so altered some of them from their original and from their orthography by other writers, as to occasion great confusion, and even to make it difficult to know, that they are the same as what we meet with in their ancient chronicles, and other modern compositions. Thus for instance, the royal palace of their monarchs, which in all their annals and records is called Teamor, by different authors hath been styled Thamor, Teamhra, Temora, and most generally, though most corruptly, Tara. Even O'FLAHERTY himself, to instance in no other word, hath latiniz'd Aonghus in too arbitrary a manner, by converting it into Æneas, instead of Angus; which would preserve the root and at the same time not sound amiss.

In this, and many other difficulties that I have met with, I had recourse to Mr. O CONNOR, the ingenious author of the dissertations mentioned above; to whom I desire to make a
public

public acknowledgement for the great trouble that I have given him. His advice upon this occasion, was to write the names as near the pronunciation of them as possible, consistently with the necessity of preserving some radical letters. This he confesses would render the sound in some places a little uncouth; as an English reader would not know, which letters were to be pronounced, and which to be suppressed: and yet a licence of another kind would destroy all etymology, without mending the matter, except to an English ear. But there is no preventing inconveniences on this head, till some common standard is fixed for avoiding the mistake to which the spelling of exotic names is subject. However, as a little help to the reader, let him remember that the letter C in Irish is always pronounced K; that the letters B H and M H are the same as V; that G H sounds like W; and where two or more vowels are put together, that seldom more than one is pronounced.

After all I am extremely sensible, that I have engaged in a very painful arduous undertaking: and notwithstanding the best endeavours are used, to which zeal, application, and a strong desire to please, could urge me, yet there is great reason to bespeak the candour and kind indulgence of the reader. The more he knows of the difficulties which such a performance must be attended with, the more ready he will be to pass by its defects. He will acknowledge particularly, that in so long a work, and where similar events occur so often, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to vary the form of expression always, and to prevent its becoming tiresome or disgusting by repetition.

Btt whatever may be the fate of this history, there are a few things which I shall beg leave to

say, and insist upon, in its defence ; that there is nothing related in it but upon good authority as far as the subject would admit of it, and faithfully reported ; nothing argued for with a partial affection to one country, or with a prejudice against the other ; and nothing contained in any part of it, which deviates from the true and noblest end of history, the persuading mankind to wisdom, liberty, and religion.

EXPLANATION

EXPLANATION

O F T H E

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INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a maxim among Philosophers, that it is impossible for us to know things well, unless we know them in their beginnings ; and tho' we are not literally to adopt this maxim when we treat of nations and countries, because of the impossibility of finding materials which are authentic in their earliest ages, yet the nearer we are able to approach to their originals, our curiosity is better gratified, and the history is more complete. But whether we can trace a nation to a very high antiquity or not, it seems necessary to give a full and circumstantial description of it, from the time that it can be known, before we attempt to relate its history. It seems necessary to give an account of its name and origin, its climate and situation, its laws and customs, government and religion, in order to enable the reader to understand the transactions which are recorded. If it should be thought, as perhaps it may, that I have been too prolix and minute in these particulars concerning Ireland, I can only say in my justification, that it is a fault which hath arisen from the other extreme ; from observing that the introductions to all the general histories which I have seen, are much too superficial ; and that we are not made enough acquainted with the people, the state of the country, and their civil and religious constitution, to understand all their history as we read it. We travel through it too much like strangers ; and our thoughts are taken up in finding out the meaning

meaning of what we read, instead of making proper reflections on it. The writers seem to suppose, that because they have a thorow knowledge of their subject themselves, their readers have so likewise. And indeed for the inhabitants of a country, such a slight introduction as hath been mentioned may be sufficient. But if it is an history intended for the use of Foreigners—and we are such with regard to Ireland—it is surely very requisite to be more circumstantial and minute, However not to take up any more time in this disquisition, which is a matter of mere opinion, I shall proceed to give the best accounts that I can meet with, of the several particulars which appear necessary to introduce an history of Ireland from the beginning.

Name. There is not a greater difference among the Historians about any thing relating to this island than about its name. It is very certain that it hath been called and known in ancient times by many different names, not at all resembling each other in sound or signification; and this variety of names, I apprehend, arises from its having been traded with by several nations, who have denominated it, in their own language, from its situation with respect to them—as we have done the East and the West-Indies—and not from any appellations which the inhabitants gave it themselves. But as it hath been distinguished in these latter ages, by no other names than Ireland, Scotia, and Hibernia, I shall not trouble the reader with the others, nor with the strange conjectures from whence they are said to have been derived. Amongst those who pretend to account for the name Hibernia, there are scarcely two who agree together. The author of the antient Manuscript in my possession which I have mentioned in the preface, says, that the sons of MILESIVS who invaded the

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the island gave it this name, either from the river Iberius in Spain from whence they came, or from HEBER one of their brethren : tho' he acknowledges that a very ancient Irish Historian affirms, that it is derived from a Greek compound word which signifies the Western Island. But there is too little similarity in the sound to warrant this conjecture.

Other Historians suppose that foreigners finding this Island an odd end of the world, moist and foggy, took it at first for a cold country, and therefore named it Hibernia, in order to express the winter land. But as a very short experience would disprove this supposition, so the name thus given to it would scarcely have been continued, even by those who might first impose it. Recourse must be had therefore to other conjectures for a reason of the name Hibernia. It is no improbable supposition, which is adopted by many antient authors, that the Spaniards, whose country when they invaded this island was called Hiberia, gave it a name resembling that of their own, and added the letter N for distinction sake. The great Antiquary of Ireland shall speak of this article in his own words : " Hibernia—as it is called by CÆSAR, PLINY &c. — the most remote country of all Europe Westward, is derived either from the word Hiar, which among the Irish signifies the West, as CAMDEN conjectures, or from the Iberians who heretofore inhabited here : from whence possibly the Island itself in ANTONINUS's Itinerary is called Hiberione, and in St. PATRICK's epistle twice by that name, and once Hiberia. — Nor ought we to omit the opinion of BOCHART, who conjectures from the name that Ireland was not unknown to the Phenicians, a people famous for their navigation into the remotest parts. The name, says he, plainly seems Phenician ;

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cian ; for Hibernia, by some called Ierne, is no more than Ibernae, or the furthest habitation ; because beyond Ireland Westward the ancients knew nothing but the vast ocean. But to speak my sense in the matter, amongst all the conjectures of the word Hibernia, none seems so satisfactory as the opinion of ISIDORE and others, who deduce it from Iberia ; both because of the colonies of Iberians once seated there, and also for the affinity of the name*."

Our antiquary SAMMES is of opinion, " that it took the name of Hibernia from the Ierne of the Phenicians, because in the uttermost coast of Spain westward, is a promontary called by STRABO, Ierne ; so that when Spain was the uttermost bounds of the knowledge of the Phenicians, it was called Ierne, but when these islands were discovered, then Ireland took the name as being the uttermost." If it would not be thought impertinent to offer my conjecture on so intricate a subject, after so many learned antiquarians, I should suggest, that as Iberia signified in the antient Celtic, which will appear to have been the original of this people, any country or place that was situated over or on the other side of a sea or river, so these might naturally be called Iberians, on account of their situation with respect to Gaul or Germany, by those who lived there and trafficked with them : and then the corruption afterwards to Hibernians, to distinguish them from the Spaniards, is easily enough accounted for. For we shall find, says SAMMES, " that the name by which all nations are known to the world, differs much from those names which they have given themselves, and by which too they distinguish one another. But the major part of the world, which is foreign to every particular kingdom, prevails in the denomination ; and therefore

* WARE's Antiq. p. 1. 2.

fore it happens, that those kingdoms themselves so denominated, are obliged to conform to the appellations given them by the major part."

The name of Scotia, says my Manuscript, was given to this island by the sons of MILESIVS, either after their mother SCOTIA, or else, which is much more probable, because they were themselves of the posterity of the Scuits, or Scots, in Scythia; which in the Celtic signifies restless wanderers. The solution of Sir R. Cox's is almost too ridiculous to be mentioned; "that the Irish being a mixt people by the time they were called Scotia, they might have that name as signifying a heap; implying that as a heap consisted of many grains, so the inhabitants of Ireland were compounded of many nations." The other opinion is supported by the best historians; and they are particularly quoted and enumerated by WARE. But it does not seem necessary to enlarge any further upon it here, than that it appears from the concurrent testimony of all ancient authors, that Ireland was called Scotia and its inhabitants Scots, before that part of Britain now called Scotland had that name: and from these genuine Scots of Ireland, the Albanian Scots who peopled North Britain had their original. The Scottish historians will not allow this, I know: but every man who has searched into the antiquities of both nations, must be very blind, or very partial, not to see it.

It is owned very ingenuously by Mr. INNES, in his "critical essay on the ancient inhabitants of North Britain", which I shall have occasion often to mention in the sequel. But in contradiction to all the Irish writers and historians, he endeavours to prove "that the ancient Scots of Ireland, were not the Milesians or the colony from Spain, who are said to have peopled that island a thousand years before the christian Æra ;
but

but a new foreign race who soon after that era came to Ireland as conquerors, and rendered themselves masters of it, in the same manner as the Franks came in afterwards on the Gauls. Among other reasons to support his opinion, he says, "that the name of Scots was never heard of in Ireland, or indeed at all, 'till the third or fourth age after CHRIST; and that they are ever after mentioned as inhabitants of Ireland and of the North of Britain. LAURENCE archbishop of Canterbury in the beginning of the seventh age, is the first that he finds who gives to Ireland the name of Scotia, in his letter to the bishop and clergy of that kingdom; and from thenceforth it is called for some ages Hibernia, or Scotia indifferently, as synonymous names for the old and new inhabitants; 'till at last it quite lost the name of Scotia, which followed the Scots into Britain, and was by degrees wholly appropriated to the kingdom of the Scots in the North of that island. He allows that the name of Scots is originally the same as that of the Scyths; and says that NENNIUS in the ninth century uses promiscuously the names of Scythæ and Scoti for the same people. But what is most remarkable, the Britons in their ancient tongue, as CAMDEN observes, call both the nations of Scyths and Scots by the same name y-Scot. This denomination, he says, gave a natural occasion to the Romans, then in possession of the South of Britain, to latinize the name of these new enemies of the empire, and call them Scoti: and thus the origin of the name is not from the Scots themselves nor from the Irish, in whose ancient language it was never in use, but a foreign denomination given them by the Britons, from their being originally Scyths, or from resembling them by their habit, arms, and customs". —It is not my

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my business in this work to enter into a discussion of this criticism, which the author has supported, it must be owned, with many ingenious arguments thro' a chapter of thirty pages. But he hath himself, in my opinion, furnished us with a fact that will overthrow it all. For if the Irish never came over in any numbers and invaded the Britons 'till the third century—which it seems was the first appearance of the name of Scots in history—and if the origin of this name was not from themselves, but given them by the Britons on their first coming, because of their resemblance to the Scyths in their arms and habit, or as being the same sort of restless wanderers, then there is no occasion for all this refinement of criticism, in opposition to the whole series of an ancient Irish History, in order to shew, that the name of Scots being never heard of 'till the third century, they could not be the Milesians who had peopled Ireland so many years before, but a foreign colony who had conquered it soon after the incarnation. For notwithstanding all this argument, that fact remains still just as did before.

As to the name of Ireland, Sir W. TEMPLE is of opinion, that it is derived from the river Ierne in this island, whence the Saxons stiled it Irenland, and by abbreviation Ireland, to distinguish it from Scotland; as they were both anciently called Scotiae, and inhabited by the same sort of people. But it is to be observed, that this name was given to it before the Saxons had any footing in these islands; and therefore this conjecture can have no foundation. The manuscript in my possession gives the derivation of this name from IRE one of the Milesian chiefs; the truth of which, it says, is more apparent, because the book of Ardmagh records, "that the name of this island signifies IRE's grave, it being the grave of IRE

one of the sons of MILESIVS, who was the first man of that colony who was interred upon the island." If this tradition is to be credited, it must be allowed to be the most probable supposition with regard to this name of any that are to be met with. But why should it not acquire the name of Iron-land--and so from thence Ireland—from the great number of mines of that kind of ore with which it abounded? In short amidst such numerous and widely differing conjectures upon a point so extremely remote, it is impossible to determine with any precision which is true. We must be content to take all such things as we find them; and if we lay no greater stress upon them than they deserve, it is not very material whether we can be exact in our account or not. Let this suffice then as to the name.

Situation This island which is surrounded by the British Ocean, and seated further to the West than any other island in Europe, is separated from England lying eastward to it about forty leagues in the widest, and twenty in the narrowest part: it hath Scotland on the North East at the distance of ten leagues; at the South East it hath France at the distance of eighty-six; and the nearest part of Spain in the bay of Biscay may be reckoned about an hundred and fifty. The Sea which is inclosed between the counties of Cumberland and Lancashire on the English coast--and comprizeth in the middle of it the isle of Mann--over against which are the counties of Dublin, Louth, and Down, on the borders of Ireland, is nearly every where of an equal breadth. But Wales, approaches nearer in two or three places; and in some as near again. For Holy-head which is in Anglesea, and the most Western corner of North Wales, is but twenty leagues from Dublin, --just half the distance to Liverpool and Chester, --which

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—which with a fair wind is not more than eight or ten hours sail. In the most Northern part of the island, opposite to which is Scotland, the Sea is so very narrow, that the shire of Galloway is not above five leagues distant from the county of Down; and further to the North it is yet less, and may be passed in open boats in three or four hours.

The extent of this island, which, next to Great Britain, is the largest perhaps in Europe, from Extent.
North to South is near three hundred English, PETTY.
and a little more than two hundred Irish miles: and from East to West, in the broadest part, it is about an hundred and fifty of the former, and something more than an hundred of the latter. Allowing for the windings of the coast, it is in compass about seven hundred Irish miles, and eight hundred and fifty English, and may therefore be computed to be nearly half as big as Great Britain. It is said to contain above ten millions of acres of land in the Irish reckoning, which is near seventeen millions of English acres: Of these, the highways, rivers, bogs, loughs, lakes, and shrubs, are thought to take up about a million five hundred; of very coarse land, commonly called unprofitable, another million five hundred; and consequently of good meadow arable and pasture there remain seven millions five hundred acres. Of these in the year sixteen hundred and seventy-two, the English, the Protestant Irish and the Church, were possessed of five millions one hundred and forty thousand; and the Irish catholicks of near half as much. Since that time there has been a considerable decrease of their property which has gone over to the other side, and it continues still to decrease every day. The inhabitants were then said to be about eleven hundred thousand; which by the ordi-

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nary course of generation — allowance being made for the effects of War, and epidemical diseases will at the lowest computation in ninety years become almost two millions : and by comparing this number with the extent of territory, even if we should admit it to be more than two millions now, as some say they are, it will appear evidently that Ireland is still under peopled. This is one of the misfortunes, and not one of the least, which that fine country labours under : For it is people that make land and the produce of it valuable ; and without them, the most fertile grounds in Ireland would be as useless as the wide wastes of America. Until this misfortune can be remedied, it is expedient that all hands they have should be employed ; not in feeding droves of cattle, but by tillage, arts, and manufactures, made to do as much work, as double the number would do under less care and management : And were the common people once made warm and thriving by their industry, they might better spare their gentry than they can do now ; they would be enabled in time to save immense sums to Great Britain, which she now pays to her rivals for sail-cloth and linen, and be a perpetual addition to her riches by a moderate encrease of the riches of Ireland. It is our interest therefore to prevent as much as possible a drain of people from that country.

Division.

Mff.

BOATE.

WARE.

BOLTON

CAMD.

Anonym.

There have been many divisions formerly made of this island, according to the old historians, by the several petty Kings and chiefs who have had possession of it. But as all these accounts are uncertain, and some of them probably may be fabulous, I shall trouble the reader with none but those which now subsist. Ireland then is divided into four provinces ; Ulster, Leinster, Connaught, and Munster : and these are subdivided into

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into thirty-two counties, two hundred and sixty baronies, and two thousand two hundred and ninety three parishes; which are all geometrically set out without abolishing the ancient denominations and divisions abovementioned. But they are become so very unequal, that some are twenty times as big as others. The county of Cork, for instance, in respect of people and parishes seems to be an eighth, if not a tenth, of the whole kingdom; and other counties not above the twentieth part of the county of Cork.

The province of Ulster takes in the Northern part of the island, extending itself to the Sea both on the East and West; the form of which is nearly round, and the circumference about four hundred and twenty miles. It takes in the counties of Donnegal or Tyrconnel, Antrim, Fermanagh, Derry, and Down, all of them bordering on the ocean; and Cavan, Monaghan, Ardmagh, and Tyrone, within the land. In this province, the chief city of which is Londonderry, there are six Bishops sees, besides the primacy.—Raphoe, Derry, Down, Clogher, Dromore, and Kilmore, — ten market towns, twenty-nine boroughs which send members to parliament, and three hundred and sixty-five parishes. This province is particularly well watered, and was anciently well wooded, which cannot be said now of any part of Ireland; but the fertile meadows, the hanging hills, and the spacious plains fit for tillage or pasture, make it delightful to the traveller as well as fruitful to its inhabitants. However what renders this province superior to the rest of the island, is the great linen manufacture which is carried on in it; which spreads over it a face of industry and commerce unknown at present in the other parts of Ireland.

The province of Leinster has the Sea only on the Eastern side of it, and comprehends the

counties of Dublin, Wicklow, Louth, Meath, and Wexford, on the coast ; Catherlough or Carlow which has a little corner extending to the Sea, and Westmeath, Kildare, Kilkenny, King's county, Queen's county, and Longford, entirely within the land. The form of this province is almost triangular, and the sides are not much unequal. The Eastern coast along the Sea shore is near eighty miles, and the circumference about two hundred and seventy. The chief city of this province is Dublin, the capital of the kingdom ; besides which it contains fifteen market towns and fifty-three boroughs. It is made up of twelve counties, in which are the sees of the Archbishop of Dublin and four Bishops, — Meath, Kildare, Fernes and Ossory, — and eight hundred and fifty-eight parishes. This whole province is fertile in cattle, and fish ; and might be so in corn, if the inhabitants would give that attention to agriculture which they ought to do, and not content themselves with the low and despicable occupation of being little better than drovers and butchers for wiser nations. The inhabitants approach the nearest to the English manners and dispositions of any part of Ireland, because they are for the most part descended of them, and this province is fuller and better inhabited than the others, having above ten thousand houses more in it than Ulster the best inhabited of the rest.

The province of Conaught has the Sea only on the Western side ; and contains the counties of Mayo, Galway, Sligo, bordering on the Ocean, and Roscommon and Leitrim inland counties. The form of it is long, and towards the North and South ends thin and narrow ; but towards the middle gets bigger and bigger, and its circumference is about four hundred miles. The principal town of this province is Galway ; and indeed

indeed it has but six others in it, being the most uncultivated and desolate of them all. It has the see of an Archbishop and three other Bishops, — Tuam, Clonfert, Elphin, and Killala, — and ten boroughs which send members to parliament; and contains in it but three hundred and thirty parishes. But even this country is replenished with corn and cattle, and has many advantages which might be much encreased by its bays and navigable rivers with which it abounds.

The province of Munster which takes in the Southern part of the island, extending itself like Ulster to the East and West, comprehends the counties of Limerick and Tipperary within the land; and Clare, Kerry, Waterford, and Cork, all washed by the Sea, but stretching themselves a great way into the Country. The form of this province is nearly four square, and the whole circuit by following the promontories and inlets is about four hundred and fifty miles. The principal city of this province is Cork, which hath of late years exceeded Limerick and Waterford anciently both beyond it. It hath only four other market towns besides these, twenty-six boroughs which return members to Parliament, and seven hundred and forty parishes. It contains the see of an Archbishop and five other Bishops:—Cashel, Waterford, Cork, Cloyne, Limerick, and Killalloe —and though it abounds with wild and solitary mountains, yet the vallies between are beautified with excellent pasture lands; which would be as pleasing to the eye, and much more profitable to the inhabitants, if many of them were turned to tillage; that the common people—which would yet be the least advantage—might be fed with bread, as well as with potatoes and milk. The reader will see from this account, that the four provinces taken together make up a kingdom ap-
pendant

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pendant to Great Britain, which for the size of it abounds as much with every thing that is necessary for profit or for pleasure as any country under Heaven. It must be owned indeed that Providence, and what with great absurdity we call Nature, hath been very bountiful to this island : and if it is not cultivated and improved so much as it may, and ought to be, we know where the fault must lie. To these four provinces many antient historians add a fifth, called Meath ; which was a part cut off from each province, exempt from all taxes, law, and contributions, and independant of all but the Monarchs of Ireland, in which a royal Palace was built, and which was to serve as the revenue or demesne lands of the crown. The old writers and records mention this division to have been made as early as by some of the Belgians ; of whom notice will be taken in the history, as one of the first colonies that got footing in this island. But Meath being a part of Leinster, and the reason for that separation having long since ceased and gone out of remembrance, it is now always included in that Eastern province.

There is yet however another division of this island necessary to be mentioned, in order to enable the reader to understand its history ; which is that of the English Pale, and the lands of the ancient Irish. The former comprehends only four counties ; Louth in the province of Ulster ; and Dublin, Meath, and Kildare in that of Leinster. The occasion of this will be best explained, when we come to treat of the war in Ireland after the conquest. At present however its necessary the reader should be informed, that tho' the English had made themselves masters of the whole island, or, to speak with more precision, tho' the Irish had submitted themselves to the English government, yet our countrymen soon quarrelling among themselves

selves about the loaves and fishes, and some of them degenerating into the barbarous fashion of the ancient Irish and joining with them, the English at last became so weakened and overpowered, that nothing remained to them of the whole island worth regarding but the great cities and counties abovementioned : to which the name of the Pale was given, because the government and authority of the English kings and plantations, which at first had been submitted to over the whole country, were then reduced to so small a compass, and as it were impaled within it. All the rest of the island remained under many petty dominions, possessed by the Irish Lords and great men, who paid little or no obedience to the government of England ; but, on the contrary, some or other of them were almost continually giving disturbance to the administration, which shut them out from any share of the transactions in it ; and the reduction of them was never brought to any perfection, till the reign of queen ELIZABETH, nor finally 'till JAMES I.

In this English pale stood Dublin, the metropolis of the island, and the royal city ; where the council of state, the parliament, and the courts of judicature are held. The situation of this city, which is neatly built, and very populous, is particularly pleasant and wholesome ; having hills on the south, plains on the west, the Sea near it on the east, and the river Liffey, which was anciently, no doubt, its bounds on the north, running now almost through the middle of it, and affording keys for the loading and unloading merchandize all along its banks, which are walled in, to a great extent ; and which afford streets for air and pleasure, as well as for the great convenience of their traffick. The King's castle, in which resides the governor, or Lord Lieutenant, is built
upon

upon a rising ground on the south side of the city ; and anciently was fortified with ditches and towers, of which there are little or no remains. It is a very noble edifice, elegantly finished, and extremely well adapted to the purposes of a royal palace. Adjoining to the castle-yard are the treasury and the arsenal for military stores ; and on one side of it, are the Secretaries of States, the Council, and the war offices. In this city, besides eighteen parish churches and two chapels, are two cathedrals of great antiquity ; one dedicated to St. PATRICK, and built at several times, wherein are a Dean who is elective by the Chapter, two Archdeacons, and two and twenty prebendaries. There is also another, and more ancient cathedral, commonly called Christ Church : the great dignities of which, except one, are in the gift of the Crown, and the Prebends in the Dean and Chapter. To this church, the Lord Lieutenant, or Lord Justices in his absence, and the House of Lords, go in state upon great holidays : on Sundays they go to the chapel in the castle, where the Chaplains of the Lord Lieutenant perform the duty in rotation ; The first Chaplain always officiating as Dean in the communion service. But as though it was out of mere perverseness, and in contradiction to the humour which in antient time prevailed universally over the island, of having music upon all occasions, there is but one choir in the whole kingdom, which serves for Christ Church and St. Patrick's ; and all the other cathedrals are mere parish churches. We read in ancient time of many academies or universities in this country ; but in these latter ages, the only place of education in the sciences is the university in this city, and first founded in the year thirteen hundred and twenty. It made but little figure however till Queen ELIZABETH built

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built the college where it now stands, and endowed it with privileges and revenues ; which were afterwards enlarged by JAMES I. But as learning encreased with the establishment of the English government, the buildings soon became too small : and the Irish House of Commons addressing King WILLIAM upon the subject, he gave three thousand pounds to enlarge it. This was however not sufficient to bring it to such a state as the cause of learning merited ; and by many grants and donations since, to the amount perhaps of thirty or forty thousand — I speak upon conjecture — it is now become a superb and elegant structure, that far exceeds any thing of the kind in England : and indeed I never saw a public building, except Greenwich hospital, the magnificence of which can be compared with it. The original constitution of this college hath been changed ; and a new set of statutes were drawn up by Archbishop LAUD, in the reign of CHARLES I. It consists at present of a Provost nominated by the Crown, seven senior Fellows, thirteen juniors, and seventy Scholars of the House, who have some maintenance on the foundation : and the number of Students at an average is about five hundred. Professorships have been erected lately for divinity, and common, and civil law, as well as Greek, and Physic ; to which may be added, Lecturers in divinity, in history, oratory, natural philosophy, botany, chemistry, and anatomy. It is therefore no wonder, that from an university thus endowed and accommodated, and in which excellent rules for study and education are very strictly and impartially observed, so many men of Learning and abilities should have proceeded, and done it honour.

The city of Waterford is a port of great trade in the province of Munster ; being situated on the

the river Sure ; and—for its fidelity to the English in former times—was endowed with many ample privileges. It is said to have been first built by some Norwegian pirates ; who though they pitched upon one of the most barren parts, and in the most foggy air of all the country, yet being a very safe and commodious situation for ships and commerce, it soon grew into a port of great wealth and power. Because though it stands seven or eight miles from the sea, yet the harbour is so deep that ships of great burden may sail up to and ride at anchor before the key ; which is said to be the handsomest in the King's dominions : and for the convenience of conveying commodities in smaller vessels to several towns in the adjacent counties by two navigable rivers near it, there is no place in Ireland, except Cork and Limerick, which can be compared with it. This is the nearest and most convenient port of any to correspond with Bristol, and all the towns of traffic on the Severn, by a due Westerly wind without any variation.

The city of Limerick in the same province, being something larger than Waterford, and the third city in the kingdom, is situated on an island surrounded by the river Shannon, and in ancient times was a very strong fortification. It is distant from the ocean about sixteen leagues, but ships of burden can come up close to the very walls. Though because of a cataract in the river a little above the town — which will be mentioned in another place—a land carriage for eight or nine miles is necessary, yet beyond that, loaded vessels of a tolerable burden may pass upon the river to many parts of the country at the distance of eighty miles. In the time of Lord STRAFFORD's administration, it was proposed to remedy this inconvenience of the cataract, by turning the course of

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of the Shannon through a large bog on the Eastward adjoining to it. But the unhappy troubles which soon ensued in that kingdom, overthrew this, and many other noble designs of a public nature that had been formed for the honour and emolument of the people of Ireland. A work of this kind however has since that been under consideration ; so as to make the Shannon navigable from the key of Limerick to Carickdrumrusk in the county of Leitrim ; and full powers were given by an act of GEORGE I. to four persons therein named, and their assigns, to proceed upon this project. But whether through inability or want of courage, or from what other cause I do not know, but nothing was ever attempted to execute the act. The commissioners of the inland navigation have now entered upon a project not only to make the Shannon navigable, but by canals and sluices to give it a communication with some other rivers of the kingdom ; and the House of Commons granted a considerable sum for that purpose. In consequence of this, a mile of canal hath been cut through a morass of 40 feet and an hill of 30 feet in depth ; which by a large single lock of wrought marble hath compleated a navigation of three miles near Limerick. Five locks more since that have been erected on the Shannon, and thereby opened an uninterrupted navigation of sixty miles in length ; and as considerable sums are given in every session of Parliament towards works of this kind, we may expect that in time the Shannon will be made navigable through its whole extent. The city of Limerick is rich and populous, and could it once avail itself of this noble river, on which it stands, by a navigation, both the city and the country round it would soon feel the effects
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in the encrease of its trade and riches. It will be ever famous to posterity, on account of the sieges it endured towards the close of the last century; when it was obliged to surrender to King WILLIAM, and complete the peace of Ireland.

The city of Cork in the same province of Munster, founded by the Danes, is almost surrounded by the river Lee: which about ten miles below it discharges itself into the ocean, and renders it so considerable a port for commerce as to become the second city of the kingdom. Indeed if the Parliament and the courts of justice were not held at Dublin, it would soon give place to Cork for wealth and traffic; which, as it is, may become its rival. It is so much improved and enlarged with elegant buildings, and with draining the marshes, within twenty or thirty years past, as to be a very different place from what it has been described by very modern writers. It is without dispute the capital of the largest, richest, best inhabited country, if we except Dublin, of any in Ireland, and the principal thoroughfare of all commodities from England to the trading towns in the province of Connaught. The most distinguished of these is Galway, whose buildings are uniform and of great extent. One would think however that it was formerly much more considerable than it is at present, from the story of a foreign merchant enquiring of an Irishman in what part of Galway Ireland lay; imagining Galway to be the island, and the latter only a noted town in it. It is not to be supposed but that in such a country as this, so fertile and so finely situated, there are many other places of great strength and commerce: but these are all that are considerable enough to be mentioned here, as what will often occur in the ensuing history.

I must

I must now turn to give an account of the ecclesiastical division of this island, which, like the civil, was made into four provinces and was confirmed in eleven hundred fifty-two by Pope EUGENIUS III. who sent the four palls of Archbishops by his Legate JOHN PAPIRUS. We are told by FLATTESBURY, "that the Legate holding a full and honourable council at Meath, where were present the Bishops, Abbots, Kings, Dukes, and Elders of Ireland, there, by the apostolick authority, with the advice of the Cardinals, and the consent of the Bishops, Abbots and others met together, the four Archbishopricks were constituted in Ireland." The primacy in reverence of Patricius—since always called St. PATRICK—was given to the Archbishop of Ardmaugh, who has the title of Primate of all Ireland. The Archbishop of Dublin, who has the title of Primate of Ireland, is consequently the next in rank; and the other Palls were placed at Cashell and Tuam. These Palls, about which so much noise was made at the court of Rome, and in the English church, in the eighth century, I have shewn in another work [b,] were nothing more than a sort of ornament of white silk and lamb's wool, of a particular fashion appropriated to Metropolitans: but when the Popes had learnt to make use of it as an artifice to encrease their wealth and power, it was intended to denote the superior jurisdiction of Archbishops. Thus USHER, himself the Primate of Ireland, tells us, "that there had been sundry Archbishops in that land, between St. PATRICK and MALACHIAS, but not one of them could be named that ever sought to Rome for a pall: and that BERNARD, who was canonised for a saint, informs us, that from the very beginning to his time the metropolitical see of Ardmaugh wanted the use of the Pall; and yet, according to him, they exercised much greater authority before than ever they did

[b] Warner's Eccles. Hist. of Eng. vol. I. p. 161.

did afterwards ; for they not only consecrated Bishops, but erected also new Bishopricks and Archbishopricks too sometimes, according as they thought fitting [c]"

In the synod abovementioned, a certain number of suffragan Bishops were allotted to each of the archbishops. Under Ardmagh were subjected the bishopricks of Down and Connor, since united ; Louth, sunk now into the dioceses of Ardmagh and Clogher ; Clonard, Kells, and Dulec, united under the title of Meath ; and Rathlurc, annexed since to Derry ; but in this distribution there were not the sees of Dromore and Kilmore, which have since been added. So that in this province, where originally were ten bishopricks, there are now only six besides the primacy. To the Archbishoprick of Dublin, were allotted the sees of Glendaloch, since annexed to it ; Leighlin and Fernes, since united ; Kildare and Ossory : but anciently Fernes itself was an archbishoprick in the time which USHER mentions above, as I have seen under his own hand in a MS. in the college library. In the province of Cashel, were distributed the bishopricks of Killaloe, Kilfenora now united to it, and Iniscathy and Roscreae, since sunk into it ; Limerick, to which Ardfert and Aghadoe are now annexed ; Emly, added to the archbishoprick ; Waterford and Lismore, since united ; Cloyne, and Cork and Ross, since united. So that instead of twelve, which was the ancient distribution, there are now only six dioceses in that province. Under the Archbishop of Tuam, were the sees of Mayo, and Ardagh—formerly united to Kilmore—annexed now both to the archbishoprick ; Killala and Achonry, since united ; Roscommon since transferred to Elphin ; Clonmack, annexed since, under the title of Kilmore, to the province of Ardmagh ; Clonfert

Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, since united. In the four provinces are now only eighteen bishopricks, under the four Archbishops, which at the synod were thirty-four : and in the early ages of the infant church of Ireland, there were many more, annexed at that time to these which have been mentioned, and which were for the most part seated in small villages. Nay it is said in a manuscript history of NENNIUS's quoted by Usher, that at the beginning St. PATRICK founded here three hundred and sixty-five churches, and ordained as many Bishops, besides three thousand Presbyters. In process of time the number of Bishops was daily multiplied, according to the pleasure of the Metropolitan; and not only so far as that every church almost had a Bishop, which BERNARD complains of, but also in some towns or cities there were ordained more than one*. But as by the consolidations abovementioned, and the improvements made in the country, the revenues of all of them are now become very considerable, for which little duty is to be done---there not being three and twenty hundred parishes amongst two and twenty diocessans ---there will probably be no more alterations of this kind to the end of the world.

Though the climate of Ireland is somewhat northerly, being above fifty-five degrees of latitude, yet the air is very temperate, and perhaps much less subject to violent frosts and severe cold than any other land lying in the same height of latitude; The cold weather begins early towards the latter end of September, continuing generally for five or six months : during which time it is necessary to have fires, as is the case in England. There are commonly three or four slight frosts in a winter, but they seldom* last longer than a few days. As the cold is moderate in the winter, so

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* Usher's Religion of the ant. Irish, p. 59.

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the heat in summer is very tolerable, and very seldom so intense as to be troublesome. In the spring of the year, it is ordinarily fair weather for five or six weeks at a time, with clear sun-shine all day long; but this being over, it rains almost all the summer, there being scarce a whole week, or even three days together, without it. In the latter end of autumn, the weather is usually fair again for some weeks though not so long as in the spring, and then the rains set in during all the winter, though not for many days together; and—I can speak from experience—not with that violence, or for whole days together, as we often have in England. In general it is observed, that the rains fall more in the day than in the night time, and when it rains for three or four days successively, the intervening nights are clear and fair. As a proof of my own observation whilst I was there, that it seldom or never rains with that violence, nor so long together, as it often does in England, we hear of no great floods carrying away bridges, filling peoples houses, covering the roads and meadows, interrupting their commerce, and drowning men and horses.

The cause of so much wet weather in Ireland has been accounted for in this manner; that the western winds meeting with no lands on this side of America to break their force, they waft hither the vapours of an immense ocean: and these condensing in their progress, not only obscure the sky, but from the nature of rest and suspension descend in such constant rains. Were this island as free from too many wet days, as it is from too many cold ones—for I question if there is more rain in the whole than in England—it would be one of the pleasantest countries in the world: as it is certainly one of the most temperate. There is great probability however that this inconvenience will be in a great measure lessened every day, as it hath been already
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in some degree, by taking care to drain more of the wet and boggy lands which abound too much in it still; and which increase, if they do not occasion, this prodigious frequency of wet weather.

But Ireland is not only subject to much rain, but, like England, also to dark and cloudy air, in winter time especially, for several days together even when it is quite dry. This is not to be understood of mists and fogs, from which it is as much exempt as other countries, particularly in the plains. There are two sorts of them however; one quite filling the air, and if it ascends foreboding rain, if it descends promising fair weather; and the other like flakes of foggy vapours, scattered up and down with clear spaces between, flying to and fro with the wind, and oftentimes ending in a general mist. As the frosts are but flight and short, so there is seldom any snow, and many years none at all, in the plains and valleys especially; neither is it often that the Irish are troubled with hail, never of any great size as we have, nor for a long continuance. This island is perhaps as little subject to lightening, and consequently to thunder, as any country in the world; there being many years in which there is none at all: and in those summers in which they happen it is seldom more than once or twice, and then the lightening is faint, and the noise of the thunder so weak, that no body is terrified, nor any damage done to man or beast. It is with windy weather in Ireland generally as it is with rain, there being more windy days perhaps than in most other countries: and yet it is much to be questioned, whether their storms are so violent, and last so many day together, as we find those in England.

But notwithstanding the wet and the windy weather to which Ireland is obnoxious, yet it is a healthy country to live in; there being as few sick, and as many aged People to be met with, as in any of its

neighbouring climates. Indeed there are several diseases common to other countries, which are extremely rare, if not altogether unknown in Ireland. The scurvy for instance, an evil so generally complained of in all other northern nations bordering on the sea, never infected the Irish, or at most in a small degree, 'till within this last century. Even the English, who have carried thither what there is of it, wear it almost out in the next generation : and yet here it prevails to such a degree, as there is scarcely a constitution which is not tainted with it. The dysentery, the flux, and blindness among the lowest people—owing probably to the smokiness of their cabins which are without chimnies—are the diseases to which Ireland may be said to be most peculiarly subject : but with care and good management, the two former are seldom dangerous or very troublesome. Whatever are their diseases, it is certain that the common people trouble themselves but little about physic : and whilst our papers are crouded with quack advertisements which cheat the people out of their money and their health, to the disgrace of the nation, not a single empyrick is to be heard of in the Irish papers, nor any medicines advertised, but a very few from England : a piece of wisdom which we are yet to learn, and which we ought by some means or other to make national.

According to the report of all history and tradition, nothing venomous is brought forth or can be nourished and live in Ireland : but whether this is owing to the air or the soil, I do not find that naturalists are agreed. The old historians indeed entertain their readers with many strange accounts of experiments that have been made of the sovereign virtue of this island in destroying venomous creatures ; and they carry it so far as to say, not only that the smell of the land will kill them, but that water, in which the scrapings of books from Ire-
land

land had been steeped, had cured the stings of adders. Our venerable **BÆDE** himself relates this very gravely : but many of the ancient Irish attribute this virtue, not to the climate nor the soil, but to the prayers of **St. PATRICK** who converted the island. Nay **KEATING** goes further than this, and tells us, that it is in consequence of a prophecy which **MOSES** made to a Scythian Prince, that wherever his posterity should inhabit, the country should not be infested with poisonous creatures. But be all this as fabulous as it may, it is impossible to read the account above which is indubitably true, of the pleasant, healthy, and temperate climate of Ireland, without being astonished at its remaining so many ages as it did, in the depth of barbarism and ignorance, uncultivated and unimproved.

The country is naturally very fruitful, and seems by the soil to have always been so ; though by the great sloth of the mere Irish, and some other causes co-operating with it, it has not had the cultivation which it deserves. Indeed that expression is too favourable ; for, to say the truth, it has scarcely had any cultivation at all. The lands of this island, like most other countries, are of various kinds and fashion ; such as hilly, champian, mountainous, and level. The mountainous parts in general are not very high nor steep, but large in circumference, and easy of ascent ; the soil of which is for the most part very fertile both for arable and pasture. Others however there are of considerable height and dimensions ; the ground of which is lean and stony, which serve only for pasture of sheep, and in several places wet and moorish. The fruitful soil of this country is in some places a blackish earth, in others sand and clay mixed, or earth and sand, and earth and gravel : but the chalky ground and the red earth, which are both so plentiful in many parts of England, are not to be found here. The places whose ground is bare are neither large nor frequently to be met with ;

Soil.

BOATE.
SMITH.
Anonym.

but those which are over-run with superfluous moisture are common throughout the island; not only on the mountains—which generally consist of nothing else—but also in the hilly quarters and plains, extending some miles in length and breadth in many places.

Bogs.

BOATE.
BROWNE.
Anonym.

Though Ireland is famous, or rather infamous, among strangers for the many bogs with which it abounds, which are neither pleasurable nor wholesome; and though they produce nothing for the food of man or beast, yet they are not to be reckoned in the number of unprofitable or useless circumstances; but upon the whole perhaps, as things stand at present, they are necessary in some degree. For in the parts distant from the sea, where wood as well as coals are wanting, these bogs afford a turf which yields sweet and agreeable fuel; and when chark'd, it is said to be the sweetest and best of all. There are three or four different sorts of bogs; some dry and grassy, others watry, muddy, and hassocky, and they are not of an equal depth. The former sort, like the fens in Lincolnshire, look fair and pleasant, are so dry in the summer that they may be passed without danger, and are full of sweet and good grass, on which cattle of all kinds are dipastured. But the deepest bogs of this sort are impassable in summer as well as winter; though they have a few firm and narrow paths in particular places, through which by those who know them, they may be crossed from the one side to the other: and this hath given the name of Irish bog-trotters to those who are trained up in it from their infancy. In running along these paths, the bogs will tremble a great way round, which are therefore called quaking bogs, and if of a small compass, only quagmires. There have been instances of some of these bogs that were of large extent which have moved their places, overrunning the ground beneath them, and moving upon its surface. But these have been
occasioned

occasioned by a more than ordinary concourse of waters, and the land adjoining, to which they removed, being considerably lower than the bogs. The watry bogs are likewise clothed with grass, but the water does not sink into them as in the former, but they both yield for the most part very good turf for firing ; and therefore are necessary, as I said, in many parts of Ireland. It must be owned too likewise they have their inconveniences ; because they keep people at a distance from one another, and consequently hinder and perplex them in their affairs. Moreover they are a great destruction to cattle, the chief commodity of this country : for in the spring of the year, when they are weak and hungry and the grass is scarce, they venture on the edges of the bogs where it grows, and so very often fall into pits and sloughs, and are either dangerously hurt in getting out, or perish irrecoverably. The natives, or mere Irish, had an advantage formerly from the multitude of these bogs, besides that of fuel ; which was that it made their country difficult, if not to strangers almost impossible of access. This not only prevented their conquest for some ages, but the fewer strangers came to them the easier they lived themselves. There were then no inns, nor houses of entertainment for travellers, but every house that a man found he made his inn ; and he said no more when he came to it but a How d'ye, and putting off his brogues, sat down to the fire with the same familiarity as one of the family.

There is a very obvious improvement, and a very easy one, to be made of many of these bogs in the same manner as it is practised with great success in Norway ; where, we are told by Bishop PONTOPIDON, they raise hillocks in them for the growing Naper turneps. The same experiment has been made on such lands in England, and with the same

advantage. There is no occasion of draining the bog for this service ; and the expence of throwing up the hillocks, which are but two foot high, is very trifling. The common English turnep will succeed in this way, though not so well as the Norway fort. But the Naper seed may be had from thence in any quantity almost as cheap as the English : and I flatter myself, that I have already been the means of introducing this improvement of those wild uncultivated wastes, by explaining it to a gentleman when I was in Ireland, and—as I could get none of the Naper—by sending him some of the properest English seed since ; which he promised to try upon his boggy land. It is not to be doubted but that the places on which all the bogs have grown, were formerly firm grounds ; since it is found that, at the bottom of all such bogs as have yet been dug or drained, there have been pieces of timber and roots of trees, upon which the marks of the hatchet and even of fire remain unto this day ; neither is their original so far back in time as is generally thought, a tobacco pipe having been found in one of them above ten foot deep.

It is to no purpose here to trace these bogs to their original, as some of their writers have done with great clearness and ingenuity ; but it is to a very good purpose to observe, that as the same causes generally produce the same effects, so the obstructions in their rivers which are daily increasing, and the neglect of making drains in their moist grounds, must every year add to the waters already contained in the pores of the earth, and so encrease their bogs. It is very useful to observe further, that as these nuisances have been principally occasioned by the obstructions in the rivers, so clearing the channels, and removing the sand-banks, mill-races, and weirs, must in a short time not only remedy the present evil, but prevent also the growth or the increase of others in time to come. The complaint
of

of the evil of these bogs and morasses is very just and very general; and is therefore an object that is worthy of the wisdom and attention of the legislature. It is certainly worth their while to consider, whether it would not be an evident advantage to the kingdom, if the Papists, who are now interdicted by law from any durable property, were admitted to one in these wilds; — where at present no man can be said to have any property, or where the owner himself will not attempt it,—on the condition of their reclaiming them in such a number of years? Whether the reduction of unprofitable mountains and vast morasses would not meliorate the air, and help to people and beautify the country; and whether a durable property in such lands, which now return no advantage and are a national nuisance, but which by culture would adorn and enrich this country, could be so hurtful even in Popish hands as in their present state, are questions which are necessary for the cool consideration of an Irish parliament: and there never was a period perhaps, in which their deliberations on the public welfare could be more ably and successfully assisted than they may be at present.

Loughs.

BOATE.
BROWNE,
Anonym.
SMITH.

Besides the bogs, there are many lakes or loughs in Ireland which deserve some description; every one of which sends forth one or more brooks, being all of them very deep, and well stored with fish. Those which are situated in a dale or valley, and surrounded wholly or in part with some little hills—which is the case of most of them—are very delightful to the eye, and afford an agreeable situation on their borders for country houses. Many of them have one or more little islands in the middle very commodious for fishing or shooting; some of which, it is said, but whether truly or not I do not know, float about as the violence of the wind directs them. The water of many of the greater

greater loughs, through the mixture of the sea which flows in at every tide, is salt or very brackish : and such properly speaking might be called arms or inlets of the sea, to which the inhabitants have given the name of lakes or loughs ; for they are several miles in compass even the least of them, and the largest look like a sea itself. Very few of the islands in these loughs are either planted or inhabited ; but as most of them are covered with good grafs they serve for pasture to sheep and other cattle. Some few houses there were in them formerly, to which those who loved quiet, privacy, and study, and others who were fond of rural sports or gardening, used to retire. In short, there are more lakes or loughs of every kind in this island than any other country, it may be, of the same extent in the world ; and they abound more in the provinces of Conaught and Ulster than in any other part of the kingdom. It must be owned that it does not fall within the design of this work to give a description of any of these ; and yet it would be almost unpardonable not to mention Lough Lene, or the lake of Killarney, in the county of Kerry, on account of the many singular beauties it contains. On one side of this lake, which is about six English miles in length, and near half as much broad at a medium, is a range of mountains whose summit is generally lost in the clouds, and whose sides down to the verge of the water are beautifully clothed with groves of various kinds of trees. An infinite number of islands of several kinds adorn this lake ; most of which, as well as the mountains on the side of it, are covered with the Arbutus, commonly called the strawberry-tree, whose verdure is blended with scarlet fruit at one time, and blossoms like little pearls at another. The trunks of these trees are frequently four feet and a half in circumference, and nine or ten yards in height. But is said that they cut them down as the chief fuel

to

to melt and refine the silver and lead ore discovered in a peninsula in this lake, and a great destruction was made of it by an accidental fire. On the other side of the lake, opposite to the stupendous mountains above mentioned, is a level and beautiful country, with the town of Killarney, and the habitations and improvements of several gentlemen at different distances. But I can enter no farther into the particular beauties of this place, which we are told is not to be described, nor to be seen, without rapture.

Of the larger kind of loughs over which the eye cannot at once command a prospect, and which have no access of the tide or mixture of the sea, there is one which seems to claim an honourable notice here; not only as being the largest in Ireland, and being exceeded by few in Europe, but also on account of its surprizing qualities. This is Lough Neagh; of an oval form indented on every side, and estimated to measure twenty English miles in length, above ten miles in breadth at a medium, and to overspread about an hundred thousand acres of land. The benefits of this lake are communicated to five several counties; and tho' it is fed by six considerable rivers, four of lesser note, and several brooks, yet it has but one narrow outlet to discharge this great conflux of water. As this does not afford a sufficient vent, it occasions the lake in the winter time to rise eight or ten feet above its summer level; which overflows the low lands on its coast, and thereby annually washes away and encroaches upon the higher ground. A method of opening this narrow passage, which is continually rendered narrower by the mud and sand thrown up in it, and the eel weirs erected near it, seems to deserve the attention of the commissioners of the inland navigation. On the shores of this lake have been found a great variety of beautiful pebbles, crystals, cor-
nelians,

nelians, mochoas, agats, and other precious stones. The water abounds with fish of various kinds in innumerable quantities, and of prodigious sizes. The lake is remarkable for two properties, the one for healing ulcers, evil, and running sores, all which in eight days time have been perfectly cured ; and the other for petrifying wood. There is no doubt but this immense lake has been occasioned by so many rivers running into it, and its having but one narrow passage out of it. The same cause continuing, the effect must still increase, till it makes its way over all the lands that are not considerably above its surface : and therefore this is an evil which requires a speedy remedy. Indeed its encrease may be not only prevented by destroying the weirs, and opening and enlarging the narrow passage, but a great part of the lands which now lie under water may be reclaimed, and rendered useful to the proprietors, and to the nation.

Rivers.

BOATE.
BROWNE.
Anonym.

The whole island is full of fountains and springs, not only in the flat and champian countries, but on the mountains and hills ; the water of which is for the most part cool, clear and pure ; and some of them are medicinal. These differ from each other, as well as from most other chalybeats, chiefly in the different degrees of strength of the mineral impregnation ; and are equally effectual in the cure of diseases as those of their neighbours. But the physicians indulging the humour of their patients in a fashionable taste for every thing that is foreign—the great bane of Ireland—refer them to the remotest parts of Europe for spaws ; when they might be supplied generally to as good, and sometimes to a better purpose, with the native productions of their own soil at an infinitely cheaper rate. No country in the world abounds more with brooks than Ireland ; which besides watering the land, and affording drink for the cattle, enable the inhabitants to gring their

their corn at an easy rate, and to serve the purposes of several manufactures. The rivers, tho' generally rocky and shallow, yet are more in number, and clearer, than those in England. The Shannon is larger than the Thames, wide and deep every where; and might at no great expence be made navigable for ships of burthen almost two hundred miles.

It must be owned that a greater attention has been given in the present age, and very deservedly, to the inland navigation; and vast sums and great encouragements have been allowed, and still continue to be allowed, for this purpose by Parliament. A navigation for boats, it has been already said, is now carrying on at a great expence from Athlone to Limerick on the Shannon: and indeed what an indolent and infatuated people must they be, if, when providence has furnished them with one of the finest rivers in the world, they should suffer it to remain of no account, and sit down contented under a load of fifty per cent for carriage more than they need to bear, and see the fertile banks of their rivers rendered useless, unprofitable, and swallowed up before their faces! By making only the river Shannon navigable, it is probable that one-third of the carriage of Ireland would in a few years be turned that way, several lands would be recovered from loughs, and others freed from those floods which at present make them of no value. Many canals are also cutting in several parts of the island, which by joining one navigable river to another, will soon encrease their commerce, and spread a face of improvement and cultivation over the country to the public good, which at present it must be owned it stands in need of.

The Shannon rises out of a ridge of mountains in the county of Leitrim, and is a boundary between the province of Conaught and the other three. In
its

its course, which is above 150 miles, it receives many great and small rivers which swell and enlarge it: and its banks are adorned with several towns of consequence, and pleasant seats. It is remarkable also for several overspreadings of its waters, which are called the loughs above-mentioned; all which abound with fish of various kinds, and many pleasant, and profitable islands. But with all the advantages and beauties of this river, it hath one great defect—a ridge of rocks spreading quite across it—which causes a cataract or waterfall that obstructs all navigation farther up the river, which is so wide and deep, that otherwise, with a little assistance, would be navigable almost to its source; not only for boats, but for barges and barks of a considerable burthen. There are several other rivers in the province of Conaught, the principal of which is the Suck; but none of them to compare to the Shannon for length, breadth, and depth. The chief rivers of Munster are the Sure and Broadwater, next to which are Cork and Kinsale; and all the rest in this province are of little moment. In Leinster, besides some that are inconsiderable, are the Oure, the Barrow, the Slane, the Liffy, and the Boyne. The two first are navigable many miles up into the country; the Liffy is the capital river in the island, not for its magnitude or extent, for several others surpass it, but because Dublin the metropolis is seated upon its borders, a mile below which it loses itself in a bay of the sea called the harbour of Dublin, which will be described presently. Between the city of Dublin and the Liffy are compleated nine miles of uninterrupted navigation; whereon are erected four Bridges, and many single, double, and treble aquæducts for the discharging underwater, all of the most durable beautiful structure, amounting to eighteen miles of finished navigation. In short it may be said, that a navigation has been already compleated of above a hundred and twenty miles thro' the body of that
kingdom,

kingdom, within these few years, with the due appendages of bridges, locks, aquæducts, &c. The principal river in Ulster is the Bann ; but which, because of a rock which directly crosses the channel from one shore to the other, is navigable only a few miles from the sea. Into this falls the Black-water, broader and deeper than the Bann : and besides these there are scarcely any other rivers in the province of Ulster, except such as are made so by the flowing in of the tide, and at its ebb remain little brooks : and of this kind of rivers there are several to be found in every province. But it may be presumed, that many of the rivers which are not now navigable might without much difficulty be made so, by draining the vast tracts of bogs that lie bordering upon them every where : and whilst there is no way of carrying to the sea ports the produce of the inland countries in such seasons as they are in demand, their superfluities must always occasion a glut of the commodities so abounding, and leave no temptation to the husbandman to follow that industry the next season : on the other hand the sea ports, which generally consume in half the year all the grain that can be carried conveniently to their markets from the neighbouring corn lands, must be obliged to send out their money for the other half year's subsistence, notwithstanding any plenty which may be in the inland countries. So that in reality for want of water carriage there is no encouragement for the farmers to produce more corn than is sufficient for their respective neighbourhoods : and whilst they labour under these difficulties, all the laws they can devise for the encrease of tillage will for ever fail of success. Were these difficulties once removed, instead of sending out above threescore thousand pounds for grain and flour, which they have done at a medium for these three years past, they might export without creating
any

any scarcity, above double that value every year ; and what a difference that would make to the publick there is no need to say.

Harbours.

Boate.

Perhaps there is no country in the world that can boast of a greater number of large and commodious harbours or havens than this island ; as the reader would acknowledge if it was proper for me to enumerate and describe them. The harbour of Dublin however may be thought to deserve some particular notice ; as being the harbour of the metropolis, and consequently more frequented with shipping than any other, because of the commodities which are necessarily imported into it for use and luxury. There is a bar however in the mouth of this harbour, which at the ebb and neap tide is somewhat dangerous to ships that are heavy laden. Those which draw more than seven or eight feet water can go no nearer Dublin than Ringsend a mile distant from it ; and the ships of less burthen are obliged to take the flood to come up to the key. This harbour has been much mended by the ballast act in Queen ANNE's time ; for before, at low water the whole haven was so dry, as well below Ringsend as above it, that a person might walk round the ships at anchor, except in two little creeks on the sides of it, in which ships may ride in nine or ten feet water at the lowest ebb. But there is not an approach to any city perhaps in the world, which strikes the eye of a stranger with more delight, and prejudices him more in favour of the country to which he is going, than the harbour of Dublin ; the land all round being disposed into such variety of hills and plains, and so many villa's of the nobility and gentry, most of them white, being scattered about them. As we gradually lose sight of these, and the eye is bounded by the city and the ships in the pool, the river becomes walled
on

on each side, 'till you arrive at the keys which have been already mentioned. In short the whole deserves a more particular description than it is proper for me to give here.

One cannot look back on the situation of this island, its soil and produce and the many noble harbours which it contains, without perceiving that it hath advantages for trade and commerce, equal if not superior to any country in the world ; and, indeed, to speak impartially, not without lamenting that it does not avail itself of these advantages in a much greater degree than it does at present. The reader must excuse my stopping here in order to make some reflections upon this head. It is a matter of the greatest importance to this nation, as well as that, to form our opinions upon it with clearness and precision : and yet it is a point which does not seem to be rightly understood by the generality of either nation ; for, according to an observation of the great and good bishop BERKLY, tho' it is the true interest of both nations to become one people, yet neither seem apprized of this truth.

On their side it is said, that the bulk of their inhabitants are the descendants of Englishmen ; that they are so far from being a conquered or tributary people, that it was thro' the blood and spirit of their ancestors that the English scepter was swayed there at first, and that the security of the crown there at this day, is the strength and loyalty of the people of Ireland, who are more engaged to secure the interests of the crown of England, than the king is to take care of them. Indeed it is said, if we would speak with accuracy upon this subject, that it is a vulgar error to call them a conquered people ; and to speak of the land without the people is in this case saying nothing at all : that if we are to understand by

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conquest,

MOLY-
NEUX.
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conquest, an invasion of a kingdom by force of arms, to which force had likewise been opposed — and in any other sense why is Ireland not to be deemed a free country? — then it is certain that this island was never so conquered by HENRY II. The civil and ecclesiastical states of Ireland made a voluntary submission to him without the least hostile stroke on any side, which exempts them from the consequences of a violent conquest: and if he had been opposed by the inhabitants, it was only the ancient race of the Irish that could suffer by this subjugation: neither the English who came over and conquered with him, nor their descendants, can in reason lose the immunities of free-born subjects. One of the articles of impeachment against the Earl of STRAFFORD, was his affirming that Ireland was a conquered country: and no speech said Pym, — one of the managers of the commons—could be fuller fraught with treason to the English state; since it tended to create a general disaffection in the whole people of Ireland to the common government. It is therefore concluded that they ought not to be held in such subjection, nor cramped so much in their commerce, as they are by England.

In answer to this it is said on our side, that as HENRY II. subdued Ireland by means of an English army, that country became annexed to the imperial crown or kingdom of England, but not to the person of the king; That this subjection was then esteemed to be a conquest, and is much more to be accounted so than WILLIAM the First's acquisition of the crown of England; and that Ireland was thereby most certainly brought under the jurisdiction of the parliamentary authority of England: That the entire submission of the people to the government of England, their receiving its laws, and being endowed with all the privileges of Englishmen,

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Englishmen, made the island become a member of and annexed to the English empire, and gave England a just title to exercise a perpetual jurisdiction over them: that all the concessions made—Ireland empowering them to hold parliaments, &c.—can be understood no otherwise, than that they should be enabled to devise and enact such laws when occasion required as were suitable to the circumstances of that country: But that no grant ever did, or ever could, make Ireland a separate distinct kingdom independent of England, or invest it with such supreme legislature as is inherent in the king with the advice and consent of the Lords and commons of England in Parliament assembled; and therefore that the English settlements in Ireland, always were and ever must be, accounted as a colony of England; which, as such, hath been supported and protected always by her, and to whose interests in commerce she ought always to contribute and submit.

It is unnecessary to enter into the discussion of this point any further here; which will have a proper place in the history of that time. It was expedient however to take notice of the controversy thus far, in order to account for the erroneous notions, which, I had said, both the kingdoms seem to entertain of their true interest; for I take this to have been the spring or fountain of their error. On the one hand the people of Ireland, looking upon themselves as free-born subjects, their kingdom as distinct and independent, and as never having been conquered, revolt against the prohibition of their woollen commerce by the English Parliament; and as tho' no other commerce could employ them, and wealth was to be derived to them from no other—perhaps because it is prohibited—they run their wool to the enemies of England; and by that means have enabled them to underfell

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us, and to take the market for the woollen trade in a great measure out of our hands. Tho' we have given great encouragement to the linen manufacture, which should be considered as the staple trade of the nation, and tho' if all their sheep walks were to be converted into tillage for hemp and flax, and all the labouring hands of the island were to be employed in that manufacture, they would always find a market for it, and their mother country would be greatly benefited by it, yet this does not content them.

On the other hand, the people of England, considering the inhabitants of that island as a colony sent from hence to possess a country that we had conquered, and that it has cost us an immense sum of money and a deluge of blood to reestablish them in their possessions, claim an absolute sovereignty over them, and to limit and direct their commerce as we please: and as the woollen is the staple manufacture of England, we prohibited their exportation to every other part of the world, any wool wrought or unwrought, and to England every thing of that kind but wool and yarn. Thus, as though the world was not wide enough for us and them, and as tho' we thought that every shilling got by the Irish was defrauding us of it because that we assert, that we have a right to limit and direct their trade, so in order to exercise that right their woollen branch was quite extinguished. Had it been limited indeed to cloths of a particular breadth and fineness, to such alone as our rivals undersell us in, there might have been some good policy in this restraint: and if we ever mean to recover it out of the hands of the French and Dutch, it must be by acting contrary to the way in which we lost it. We lost it by driving the Irish to a better market for their wool than England, with too rigid an exertion of our authority over them, and by the high taxes and high living of our people:

people: and it is only to be recovered by admitting the Irish to share with us in the profits--which may be confined to ratteens, draps, kersies, or even to undied cloth, and half manufactured, which shall receive their full perfection only in England—who have no taxes on their milk and potatoes, who live cheaper than any other manufacturers in Europe, and who can consequently undersell all the world. This will effectually prevent their running the wool to France or Holland, whose manufactures therefore must in a great measure fall; and it will as effectually restore it to the English. Even the profits made by the Irish would eventually center here. But we seem ignorant of this in England: and this ignorance occasions the capital error of our conduct towards this people. It is fit therefore that it should be explained.

It appears from the custom-house books, that the imports of Ireland from Great Britain alone, amount to near five parts in eight of their whole importation, and consist chiefly of commodities worked up to the height; and it will be found perhaps on examination, that they take off a much greater quantity of the several manufactures of England, except our woollen, than any other country in Europe. On the other hand, the woollen yarn and worsted which we receive from them, so far from being a loss to the nation as most importations are, when fully manufactured by us in England, will sell for two hundred thousand pounds a year more than the prime cost, in foreign markets. In the same manner their linen yarn, which we work up into tickens, tapes, girths, and other manufactures, yield an annual profit of an hundred thousand pounds: to say nothing of the raw hides, linen, and tallow, which we export from them into foreign countries and our plantations to great advantage. It appears also from the estimates of the tannage of shipping employed yearly in the trade of Ireland, that

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the British tunnage is more than two-thirds of the whole, from which there arises a profit to us of above three-score thousand pounds a year in this article of freight only in the Irish trade: and as their exportations as well as their freight are principally carried on by English merchants, it may reasonably be computed that a profit of eighty thousand pounds a year arises to England from their exports considered in this light. Add to all these advantages, the greatest perhaps of all, that which arises from the nobility and people of estate and employment who spend their incomes in England, and then it will evidently appear, that if England does not gain by Ireland alone, half as much yearly as it does by all the world beside, as many people suppose, yet there is no country in Europe that brings so much profit to another, as Ireland does to England. Before the Irish Papists were thoroughly reduced by CROMWELL, that kingdom was only a dead weight upon England: it had little or no trade, few or no manufactures, and a very small vent for English consumable commodities. Poverty and the effects of war supplied the place of luxury; and the Irish gentlemen were not rich enough to be absentees. It was then that maxim was received into the English Politicks, "that keeping Ireland poor was of great advantage to England;" and therefore it was necessary to cramp her trade and discourage her manufactures. Nor was this opinion ill founded at the time it was formed. Experience had too fully shewn our Ancestors, that as long as the Popish or Irish interest was superior, the more powerful the natives were, and the greater disturbances were created to England, they either struggled to throw off the English government, or else to establish the Popish religion. But though that kingdom still bears the name of Ireland, and the Protestant inhabitants are called Irish, with old Ideas annexed to those names of opposition to the English

English interest, and though these Ideas are so strongly associated, like ghosts and darkness, that most of our countrymen find it difficult to separate them, yet the scene is quite changed from what it was when such a disadvantageous way of thinking about Ireland took rise. Almost all the lands of Ireland are in possession of the descendants of English Protestants, linked in the strongest manner, as well by civil and religious interest, as by inclinations, to the fortunes of Great Britain.

A computation was made about thirty years ago; that the profit arising to us from all our plantations and islands in America, never exceeded seventeen hundred thousand pounds a year : and at the same time it was thought, at the lowest calculation, that we gained from Ireland alone fourteen hundred thousand. From hence it will follow, that the improvements made in Ireland have had the same effect on England, by employing her poor, bringing wealth into the nation, and encreasing the number of shipping, as if the same improvements had been made in Yorkshire or any county in England : and therefore though their people were more fully employed than they are, though their exports were enlarged, and their gain from other nations by a greater liberty of trade were much more considerable than it is, yet very little of this wealth would stay with them, but it would as naturally flow to England as the river does to the ocean. It is therefore OUR interest to give the people of Ireland full employment, to encourage their industry in every branch of trade, and not to stop any inlet through which their treasure may come in, since every acquisition or profit they can make will at last center amongst us. It is THEIR interest not to extend their commerce to such manufactures or commodities, as will prejudice their mother country which protects and defends them in the enjoyment of their property, but to cultivate the manufactures

which lie open to them ; and which at the same time that it would give full employment to all their people, and be a source of wealth and comfort, would be real advantage to their friends in England. The importance of the subject to both nations must be the apology for this long digression : and to those who read it with the same intention with which all history should be read, the apology will be sufficient.

Woods.

MR.

BOATE.

ANONYM.

There was so much wood in Ireland in the earliest ages, that one of the names which it had from foreigners was the " Island of Woods ;" given to it, say the old historians, by one whom NINU the son of BEL sent to discover it. Indeed by all the writings and monuments of ancient time, whether there is any truth in the old Irish saying or not—" that it was thrice under the plow-share, thrice it was wood, and thrice it was bare"—it appears that as long as the land was in possession of the native Irish, it was full of woods on every side. Thus in digging out the earth for a new canal from Lough-neagh to Dublin for an inland navigation, which will presently be taken notice of, a forest, as it may be called, was discovered under ground ; a vast number of fallen trees of ash, oak, alder, &c. lying near a mile in length under a covering of earth, in some places six, in others eight foot deep, many of them of large bulk tumbled down one over another, some lying in strait lines, and others in a transverse or oblique position. Many discoveries of this kind are continually made all over the island ; and there is scarce a bog but what affords plenty of timber buried in it, cut down, no doubt, by some of the first inhabitants in order to make room for tillage and pasture : but in a long course of time they have been covered over by a stagnation of waters, which the trees themselves, being thus felled and disposed of, might have first occasioned, and by the high
lands

lands being dissolved with repeated rains, and, together with the earthy particles of rain water, lodging upon them. The names of many forests thus reduced are still preserved ; and they were in the early times so numerous as to be a great incumbrance ; as appears from many instances in the ancient history. But since the conquest, in order as well to furnish timber for their houses, and convert the land into more profit, as to deprive the rebels and robbers of their lurking holes and places of refuge, the greatest part of the woods have been reduced to arable and pasture ground, or turned into bogs. Indeed they have been so much reduced, that the inhabitants in general not only want wood for firing, but to carry on the business of building and repairing houses.

It is strange that in a country, where about an hundred years ago near a fourth part of the profitable land was under forests, they should now be reduced to the necessity of planting, or submit to an expence, which, at a medium for the last three years, amounted to above fifty-five thousand pounds a year. But besides the reasons which I have already assigned for such a reduction, the people of England, and many foreigners, were used to build a great deal of shipping there, as frequently as they now go to their ports to victual them ; and many landlords tied their tenants to burn nothing but wood, and to cut down so many acres a year. This in some time helped to clear the land in a good measure ; their buildings and spendthrifts, with the tanners and iron works, soon devoured the remainder ; and their planting now goes on as slowly, as if they still remembered the inconveniences which their ancestors laboured under from the immense woods in their days. A great deal however, it must be owned, hath been done in this way within these thirty years, but a great deal more remains yet to be

be done : and if, instead of making new purchases, their gentry would improve their old estates, by draining and planting and making hedge-rows and inclosures with all the arts of good husbandry (the expence of trees and ditches being trivial, and the work being performed by their own poor cottagers and tenants at low wages) this would be an advancement of their estates perhaps to double value, at only four or five years purchase ; and would at the same time be of great utility and ornament to their country. Of the same benefit perhaps it might be to both, if their gentry were allowed by law, to bequeath a limited quantity of acres thus planted with forest trees, to encrease the small provision which many of them make for their younger children, and to assign a proper time for cutting them down, and carrying them off.

Mines.

BOATE.
SMITH.
WALSH.
Anonym.

Of the mines which are now in Ireland there were none that we know of that were discovered by the ancient Irish, nor by the English 'till the latter end of the reign of Queen ELIZABETH. Since that period many mines of iron, and some of lead and silver mixed, have been found in divers parts of the island. This hath given rise to an opinion of many skilful people that the mountains of Ireland are full of metals ; and that if the same care and diligence had been used by the inhabitants of that country in former ages as there hath been since the period above-mentioned, many more might have been discovered ; not of the same kind only with those which are now worked, but of others also, and perhaps even of gold itself. We find a commission in RYMER, granted by EDWARD the third, in the year thirteen hundred and sixty, to the justiciary and Treasurer. of Ireland and the Archbishop of Dublin, to make a trial of the mines of gold and silver, which, he says in the commission, he was informed were to be found in many parts of Ireland : but what was the issue of their experiment we are not told.

Out

Out of a rivulet in the county of Tyrone called Miola, which rises in the mountain Slowgalen, has been gathered a drachm of pure gold: and it is not an uncommon thing for rivers, which proceed from mountains that have gold within their bowels, to carry it along with their sand, out of which it is collected by poor people. But the account of this gold, which was given to the historian who relates it only on report, is said by latter writers to want confirmation, and that perhaps upon enquiry it might degenerate into copper; of which there have been great discoveries, particularly in the counties of Wicklow and Kerry, and in other parts of the island.

In answer to this objection which is founded only upon conjecture, it may be observed, that much older writers have mentioned the gold mines of Ireland, though they have not described or pointed them out, as well as EDWARD the Third, in the commission above-recited. We are told that they were discovered in the days of Paganism under the tenth Milesian monarch, and so much use was made of them, that the succeeding monarch ordained, that all the gentry should wear golden chains about their necks. The chronicles of the next reign take notice, that gold rings were then first used in Ireland; and a few years after silver shields were brought in fashion, by a monarch who acquired the title of Airy-theach, which imported "silver-ed." A silver seal of one of the Kings of Connaught, and a bit of a bridle of solid gold of ten ounces, which were found in digging in some grounds, were sent as a present to King CHARLES the first, by the Earl of STRAFFORD. A great number of goldsmiths are mentioned by several writers: and we are told that there is scarce an instance in their ancient history of any chalice, viol, or utensil dedicated to sacred uses in the church or at the altar, other than of pure gold or silver; which might probably give rise to this opinion of their
their

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their mines. But to pass by these uncertain conjectures for the present, I shall trouble the reader with an account only of the mines which are now discovered.

The Iron mines, which I shall begin with, are of three sorts, the bog, the rock, and the mountain mine ; which last is again distinguished, into white, pin, and shell mine. Besides these there are three mines of lead and silver mixed ; so rich, that from one in the county of Antrim, every thirty pounds of lead yielded a pound of pure silver. The veins of another mine in the county of Tipperary, which gives the name of Silver-mines to a market town there, commonly rise within three or four spit deep from the surface, the land being mountainous and barren, and yield two different sorts of ore : the one, which is most usual, is of a reddish colour hard and glistering, and the other like a marle blueish and softer than the first, though judged much the best and to produce the greatest quantity of silver. The ore has yielded generally about three pounds of silver out of a tun, besides a great deal of lead, and some quicksilver, which made it very valuable. In the time of Lord STRAF-FORD's administration, he sent an ingot of silver to King CHARLES the First, of three hundred ounces from the Royal mines of Ireland : and in about four years after, he tells the Secretary of State in one of his letters, " that the lead mines in Munster were so rich, that every fodder of lead" — which may be meant of a load — " had in it to the value of thirty pounds of fine silver."

There are several considerable collieries in many parts of the island, probably enough to supply all Europe with coals ; and yet at a medium for these three last years, it appears that they have imported of this commodity annually from Great Britain, to very near the amount of an hundred thousand pounds ;

pounds ; though the price of coals at Dublin is seldom much more than half what it is at London. There is a coal-mine which was discovered by accident in digging for iron ore, which is more than enough to supply the island, and all the people living near it make use of no other firing ; but being situated far from any navigable river, there is but little resort to it except from the inhabitants in its neighbourhood. There is however such an obvious remedy for this misfortune of its situation, that in these days of improvement it is surprising it hath not been practised ; and if it is impracticable to bring the commodity to a market, they should endeavour to carry a market to the commodity. It is probable that Birmingham and Sheffield were erected upon the spot of ground on which they are — the two principal towns in England for hardware of every kind which is to be worked with fire — because those spots were in the neighbourhood of very great and extensive collieries. Thus artists and manufacturers may, with some expence and good management, be brought together also in those parts of Ireland where coals abound, 'till they encrease into little towns : and a people living thus close together, would not only cause a consumption of this fuel, but add soil to the land, improve the adjacent country, raise the value of estates where they settle; and bring riches into the kingdom by their labour.

Another discovery was made of a colliery bordering on Loughneagh ; an act of Parliament passing about thirty years ago to encourage the draining of bogs and unprofitable low lands, a canal was made at a great expence in order to bring coals from it to Dublin ; but, for some reason or other, of little profit that way to the public. There is a very considerable colliery at Ballycastle in the county of Antrim, and great sums have been
given

given by Parliament to make a harbour for the transportation of them, but without effect; the piles being destroyed by a worm in a few years. Whether this evil could not be remedied by stone piers, in a country where stone is much more plentiful than wood, is a question perhaps that would not be pertinent if one was acquainted with the place; but without knowing any particular reasons to the contrary, it is an obvious question, and very natural. But whatever are the reasons for not working the other coal pits in the island, there cannot surely be a sufficient reason, why those near the Barrow, a fine navigable river, may not be carried down to Waterford, and come very cheap to Dublin. Nor indeed does it seem to be a sufficient improvement, or what they should content themselves with, to bring their own coals to Dublin; but their merchants might easily, and with good profit, raise a fund there for laying in a good stock of them when they are cheap, to furnish the poor with at a low rate, and in small quantities in winter. This would be of great service to enable the manufacturers to work cheap, and prevent those combinations and extortions which both rich and poor are now liable to; and to remedy which the Parliament is obliged frequently to interpose. In short they might not only furnish themselves with their own coals, for which such an immense sum is now sent annually out of the kingdom, but might also export them to Holland at high prices, and employ a great deal of shipping to the benefit of the publick.

To the metals and minerals which have been mentioned, may be added the quarries of slate and stone and marble, which are in many parts of Ireland in great plenty, and of a very valuable species. In the county of Waterford particularly there is a fine black marble without any mixture;
another

another black and white ; a grey marble beautifully clouded and spotted like some kinds of shagreen ; and besides these, a variegated sort composed of several colours, as brown, white, yellow, and blue ; blended into various shades and figures very beautiful, and all of them capable of a fine high polish. In short, marble abounds almost every where ; but the most famous place for it is the county of Kilkenny, where it is cut and polished by a water-mill. Kildare house in Dublin — the most magnificent Town-house perhaps in Europe — and the Provost's-house at the college, are built of marble from Ardracran in the county of Meath, which polishes to a dove-colour. The stone which they call Mountain grit, of which the Parliament-house, the College, and most of the modern structures in Dublin are built, is in colour nearly equal and mixes well with our Portland stone, but is much superior to it in hardness. The Kerry stones, which are worked by Jewellers, and set in necklaces and sleeve buttons, are greatly superior to those of Bristol, being almost as hard as a flint ; some of them are of a fine light brown, and others not inferior in colour to the amethyst.

Having given the reader this general view of the exterior of the country which I am introducing to his acquaintance in the following work, I shall now proceed to give some account of the inhabitants, their laws and language, religion, manners and government, as far as it can be collected out of the rubbish, and distinguished from the fables of the most ancient authors. Tho' it is impossible to deduce the original of any nation with truth and certainty which is not found in Scripture, and it may therefore be thought in vain to look for authorities any where else, yet where profane and sacred history coincide, or where the former is not repugnant to the latter, some little traces may be

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be drawn and conjectures formed with probability ; at least nobody can presume to say that they are false and groundless. As to the order or method wherein the first plantations of the earth were made, some have imagined there was little or none, and that each colony settled where they did by chance ; every one seizing on such countries as it casually arrived at. But if we consider with any attention the account which is given of this transaction by the sacred historian, we shall find nothing more foreign from his intention than such a precipitate and confused dissipation. For we are told with regard to the sons of JAPHET, the eldest branch of NOAH's posterity, " that by these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families in their nations." By the isles of the Gentiles is understood, among all the ancient writers, the islands of Europe ; of which the British islands, as being the largest, must be allowed to be the chief. These therefore were the portion of the descendants of JAPHET ; and accordingly JOSEPHUS tells us, that the Celtes or Gauls were descended from GOMER his eldest son. To this may be added the concurrent testimony of many ancient fathers and historians to prove that GOMER was their founder : And if this is not sufficient, we may bring another witness in CLUVERIUS, who proves that the ancient Celtic nation, which among other regions, he says, included the Britannic and Northern isles, did all speak the same language from GOMER, which was preserved among his descendants. Mr. VOLTAIRE indeed is pleased to treat the peopling of the West, by the descendants of GOMER, as a vain conceit, and calls it a fiction of the East ; but he is too great a genius to tread in the common track, and of all historians has the least reason to talk in this manner ; because he frequently substitutes his own
vain

vain conceits in the room of incontestable evidence and authority ; as his many falsifications of our own history prove.

At what particular period it was that these Celtes migrated into Europe, and even when they had got footing in the pleasant and more Southern parts of it, how long it was before they spread themselves so far Northward as to these our regions, it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to say. The most ancient foreign history of any credit will give no light into this transaction ; but we may safely venture to pronounce, I believe, that it was not immediately after the dispersion of mankind at Babel, as the old Irish historians would fain persuade us. For it is in the highest degree absurd to suppose, that they could come into Europe or these isles by sea with such a numerous retinue, so long before any thing of navigation, even by coasting, was at all known in the world. Nor is it indeed much more reasonable to imagine, that they would traverse the ocean to these islands, till they found themselves too much straitned in the more pleasant climates of the South ; which in all probability was not till a good while after their first migration into Europe. This is sufficient to discredit the old Irish histories, as to the very high antiquity of the first inhabitants ; the most reasonable of those writers deducing it from the dispersion of mankind at Babel, when JAPHET and his posterity, they say, emboldened by NOAH'S example, ventured to commit themselves by ships upon the sea, to search out the unknown corners of the world, and so found out this Western island. But tho' this very high antiquity may be justly disputed for many reasons, yet I think it is not to be doubted, that these Northern countries were peopled more early than the generality of criticks are inclined to allow. MOSES tells us that the

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isles of the Gentiles were inhabited, which all interpreters acknowledge to mean the islands of Europe: and the great antiquity of the language of the original Irish, which will be hereafter proved to be the same with the ancient Celtic, shews the great antiquity of the nation, and that these elements were imported and brought into Ireland, when the use of letters was in its infancy. The old Celtic bears so great an affinity to the ancient Hebrew, that to those who are masters of both, they appear plainly to be only dialects of the same tongue; or, to speak perhaps more properly, the Celtic is a dialect of the Hebrew. This surely lays a fair foundation for an ancient history to be built upon; for a nation and language are both of an age, and if a language be ancient the people must be as old.

Upon the whole it seems highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the British isles were first peopled by the ancient and warlike Gomerians, corruptly after called Cymbrians; which last name, as well as the language of that nation, or rather a dialect of it, is still preserved in the north part of Wales. In a short time after the peopling of Britain, as Ireland in clear weather may be discerned by the eye from most of the northern, and from some of its western parts, it is natural to suppose that many adventurers transported themselves thither and possessed the island. There is scarcely any thing more difficult than to settle the chronology of such very ancient colonies; but by comparing one historian with another, and from what still remains of known appellations and events, it seems reasonable to imagine, that Ireland was thus first inhabited. The nearness of the countries, and the affinity in language and customs civil and religious used among the ancient Britons, may well induce us to believe that they had the same original, and were peopled much at the same time.

time. Thus Ireland was anciently called a British isle, by **PLINY**, **POLYBIUS**, &c. and the manners of the ancient Britons and Hibernians were much the same. The soil and climate, the customs and dispositions of the people, says **TACITUS**, speaking of the Irish, differ little from those of Britain. This account is confirmed also by two of the oldest historians that we have. **NENNIUS**, a Briton who flourished in the year of **CHRIST** eight hundred and fifty, says, "If any one would know how long Ireland was desert and uninhabited, the most knowing of the Scots—the name then in Britain for the Irish—have told me thus; "The Scythians in the fourth age of the world obtained Ireland;" and this fourth age, according to his computation, was from the time of **DAVID**. **HENRY HUNTINGDON** is still more particular, and says, "The Britons in the third age of the world came into Britain, and the Scots into Ireland in the fourth." Why they computed the fourth age of the world from the time of **DAVID**, this is not the place to relate; but it is allowed that he was anointed king over Judah about a thousand and fifty years before the Christian æra; which is the same period exactly in which the best Irish historians affirm their country was invaded by the Scythians out of Spain. Let it be observed that there is no contradiction at all in allowing, that these descendants from **JAPHET**, by **MAGOG** his second son, might some time after possess themselves of the southern parts of Ireland from Spain, as the Gomerians, afterwards called Gauls, had peopled the northern and eastern parts from Britain; and as they sprang from the same original, their manners and language would probably differ but very little.

But to say the truth, historians have been so confounded by their variety of names, migrations, and exploits, that it is not easy to know, whether they

speaking of the same nations under different names, or of two distinct people. At least it is evident, that HERODOTUS, PTOLOMY, and JUSTIN, to name no more, have called the Scythians by some names, and attributed some actions and places to them, which upon closer examination have been found to belong to the Celtes or Gomerians whom they had driven out of their territories. The ancient geographer STRABO, noted for his accuracy, tells, that the old Greek historians gave the name of Scythians and Celto-Scythians to all the inhabitants of the northern regions; though it is plain that a considerable part of them were properly Celtes or Gomerians. He adds that these, which were likewise called Iberi and Celt-Iberi, peopled Spain and Gaul, and from thence went into the neighbouring countries; and amongst the rest came over into Britain and Ireland.

If for the reasons above mentioned many learned men have chose to reckon them as one people, branched out into that variety of names and characters under which they are distinguished by various authors, it is no wonder that the old Irish historians who were not learned should run into this mistake, and confound the Scythians with the Gomerians. But we are told by Mr. INNES, "that the first inventors, as he calls them, of the genealogies of the Irish, bring their descent from GOMER as being JAPHET's eldest son; and so it is set down by MACRAITH—in a manuscript in a library of the then Duke of CHANDOS—one of the most famous Irish genealogists; and the Scots have still retained it [a]. I must confess, after reading all that I could find written on every side ancient and modern, I am inclined to think with Bishop STILLINGFLEET, that some of the Celtes from Britain, who in STRABO are called Iberi,

[a] Critical Essay on the ancient inhabitants of North-Britain, p. 485.

Iberi, passed over into Ireland in a very early age of the world ; and that afterwards some of the Scythians coming from Spain into Britain, and finding it peopled went into Ireland, and subduing the first settlers took possession of that island. Of the same opinion is the celebrated British antiquarian LHUD in the preface to his Glossography ; which he supports by reasons that are drawn from a comparison of the original languages, and which seem conclusive to an impartial and unprejudiced mind. See here then the original of the ancient Irish ; and if all other proof of it were wanting, the pride and sloth of the common people, who have not mixed in the affairs of love or marriage with the English, would be a strong presumption of their affinity with the Spaniards. But it is said there are very few of the better sort of the Irish whose ancestors have not intermarried with the newcomers ; and that the best Irish and the best English families have been so blended by alliances of this sort, that there are scarce any remains of the noble Milesian stock entire and unmixed. As to the other part of the inhabitants, which for the sake of distinction I call the people of Ireland, and who, though not half perhaps in number, yet have got the most considerable footing in point of rank and property, it is unnecessary to say any thing more of their descent, than that their ancestors in different ages, since the latter end of the twelfth century, were adventurers from Britain.

There is no difficulty in determining whence the original Irish language was derived ; though if we assent to what is said by their old historians, we must either believe that one GATHelus was the founder of it, and that he devised it out of all other languages then known in the world, or that PARTHOLANUS a branch of JAPHET who first seized on Ireland, brought the same kind of language that

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befell his family at the desolation of Babel. But the first is too fabulous to deserve any attention ; and the last is not exactly true. The language of Ireland at its first peopling, if no proof existed of it, we might reasonably conclude must be the original Celtic or Gomerian ; which was universally spoken over Europe at that time, and is judged the most original and unmixed language yet remaining. A very ingenious Irish writer, Mr. O CONNOR, [b] mentioned in the preface, to whom this volume owes great assistance of a private as well as a public nature, claims the preference of their own to all other Celtic dialects, in point of purity, if not antiquity, and affirms that the ancient Celtic is to this day a living language in Ireland. The reader shall now see this proved plainly by Dr. RAYMOND, once a fellow of Trinity College at Dublin, and perhaps the best and most learned antiquarian that Ireland ever produced. He tells us, [c] that in order to discover the original of the Irish nation, he was at the pains to compare all the European languages with that of Ireland, which he observed to have little agreement with any of them. This put him on having recourse to the Celtic, the original language of the antient Celtæ ; who were likewise called Scythians by the most ancient Greek writers. He examined the Celtic by LHUDY's and PEZRON's Vocabularies, and found a great affinity between them : but reading the Lord's prayer in above an hundred languages, versions, and characters, printed at London in seventeen hundred, he discovered the Irish language to be the very same with the Celtic, as will appear by the specimens

[b] Dissertations on the Ant. Hist. of Ireland, An. 1753. p. 37. 8.

[c] Introduction to the Hist. of Ireland, p. 2.

mens of them in that prayer ; and which for the satisfaction of the curious shall be given below [d]. There being such an exact agreement between them, and the Irish having no affinity with any other known language in the world, excepting the Hebrew and Phenician, this is sufficient he thinks to procure that credit to the Irish history which it may justly challenge ; and which, for want of proving a point of that importance, they have not hitherto met with. For if it can be made out beyond all contradiction, that the use of letters in this island was as early as the relations in any history which is allowed to be authentic, then the common objection against the credit of the Irish histories, that the use of letters began here after the entrance of Christianity, will be wholly removed.

G 4

These

[d] C E L T I C A.

1. Our narme ata ar neamb,'
2. Beanich * a tanim.
3. Go diga do riogda.
4. Go denta du hoil, air talm in marte ar neamb.'
5. Tabuar deim a niugh ar naran limb'ali.
6. Agus mai duine ar fiach ambail near marmhid ar fiacha.
7. Na leig sin amb'aribh ach foar sa shin on olc.
8. Or sletsa rioghta comtha agus gloir go sibh'ri. Amen.

[d] H I B E R N I C A.

1. Arnathair ata ar neamb.
2. Naomhthar *hainm.
3. Tigheadh do rioghachd.
4. Deantar do thoil aran talm mar do nithear ar neamh.
5. Ar naran laothamhail, tabhair dhuinn a nin.
6. Agus maith dhuinn ar bhfiaca mar mhaithmidne darbh feitheamh paibh fein.
7. Agus na leig sin a cca-thughadh, achd faor inno olc.
8. Oir as leachd fein an Rioghachd agus an chumhachd agus an gloir go fior ruighe. Amen.

* Beanich and Naomhthar, and Amb'aribh and Cathughadh, have the same signification in the Irish ; the other words are the same. I take the omission or addition of letters to be the fault of the press. Raymond's Introduction, p. 3.

These specimens are observed by MR. O'CONNOR to be the same in words and syntax, allowing only for the errors of transcribers; which by an extraordinary fate, considering their ignorance and negligence, happen not to be very considerable. Hear how he accounts for its preservation amongst the Irish. "Whatever changes this original language might have suffered on the continent, there can be no wonder in the preservation of its primitive syntax in Ireland, when we consider the many schools and colleges kept here through most ages, and the genius of the people so much turned to literature and philological learning: add to this a form of government, in which oratory and eloquence became absolutely necessary to bolster up the selfish motives of ambition, a continued security from abroad, and the same popular government ever prevailing at home [e]." There are but eighteen letters in the Irish alphabet, of which a third part are vowels: and as such a proportion must declare both softness and harmony, so it is clear of those harsh sounds so frequently to be met with in all other Celtic dialects. The letters are ranged in a different order from the alphabet of the Romans, as the reader will see below [f], and which was brought thither in the fourth century by the Christian missionaries. All this added to the paucity of their numbers and distinct powers, shews evidently, says the same writer, "that those elements were imported

[e] Dissertations, ut supra, p. 42.

[f] THE IRISH FEADA.

1 B Beth.	7 D Duir.	13 R Ruis.
2 L Luis.	8 T Tinne.	14 A Ailm.
3 N Nion.	9 C Coll.	15 O Ou.
4 F Fearn.	10 M Muin.	16 U Ur.
5 S Suil.	11 G Gort.	17 E Eeachadh.
6 H Uath.	12 P Peth-boc,	18 I Idho.

ported before the additional cyphers were invented, and before any commerce began between our ancestors and the learned nations : And these extraordinary facts summed up together fairly account for the use of letters in Ireland from the first entrance of the Iberian Spaniards, whom we now call the Scottish or Milesian colony [f].”

I shall not however conceal from the reader, that Mr. INNES has spent about thirty pages [g], to shew that the Irish had not the use of letters before St. PATRICK, and that their proper names to express Letters, a Book, to Read, Write, &c. are all derived from the Latin. But if the Irish is the Celtic language, as it seems to be incontrovertably proved above, which the first inhabitants might bring with them from Britain or Spain, then this writer himself hath furnished us with an answer to all this labour'd criticism in two or three lines, by saying “that the name of BARD is originally Celtic, from whence the Greeks and Latins had it.” Nay he owns in the same page, that the Irish is originally a dialect of the Celtic. Instead therefore of the Irish borrowing their words from the Latin as abovementioned, why may not the Latins have taken these from the Celtic; as well as that of Bard ? The Abbe PEZRON has made it appear they have done this with regard to the names of all the days in the week, most of the days of the month, the word Disco, to learn, and above three hundred other words which he hath given a list of [h]. In short the great argument upon which so much stress is laid by this Scottish writer, and by others upon his authority, falls entirely to the ground for want of truth to support it. So far is it from being true,
“ that

[f] Dissertations, p. 45.

[g] Crit. Essay, p. 440—468.

[h] Antiq. of all nations, p. 200 and sequ.

“ that there are no expressions or terms in the Irish language for Letters, Book, Reading, Writing &c. as being all things of which the Irish had never any use before the time of St. PATRICK,” that they had original terms for these in their own proper language, without borrowing them from the Latins ; as the reader may see below [i]. In order to get rid of the difficulty of the entire disagreement between the alphabets, Mr. INNES roundly asserts upon his own authority, “ that the Bethluis-nion is nothing else but an invention of some of the Irish Sennachies, who, since they received the use of letters, have put the Latin alphabet into a new arbitrary order, and assigned to each letter the name of some tree ; and that this was not the genuine alphabet of the Irish in ancient times or peculiar to them ; but a bare inversion of the Latin alphabet [k].” As all this is said without any proof, suppose I should as roundly contradict it : the fact or authority of the Bethluis-nion will remain just as it did. Why did not Mr. INNES produce the genuine alphabet of the Irish in ancient time, if this is not it, to support his assertion ? The only answer to this must be, that he had it not in his power ; for he certainly would have done it, if he had been able. But if the Irish had been so many ages in possession of the Celtic language before that of the Greeks or Romans appeared there, is it at all likely, is it credible that they had no letters nor alphabet in all that time, and that an Irish Sennachy or Bard adapted one to their language by an inversion or excision of the Roman alphabet ? Let nobody who can swallow this absurdity, make any objection* to the fables

[i] A Letter, Fiodh. A Book, Cion. Science, Ealadha, Creath. History, Seanchus. Philosophy, Fileacht. Law, Dligeadh, Feneachus. Poetry, Dan, Duain, &c.

[k] Critical Essay, p. 446, 447.

fables of Irish history ; he is very well qualified to digest them. Had INNES contented himself with saying, that the present letters of the alphabet were borrowed mostly from the Romans, it might have passed uncontradicted ; but that does not prove, that the Irish had no alphabet nor letters of their own. Many characters of such letters are still to be seen in their old manuscripts ; and a book written entirely in them is now in the possession of Dr. SULLEVAN of Trinity College. Before the use of paper or parchment, the matter on which the Irish wrote their letters, was on tables cut out of a Beech-tree and smoothed by a plane, which they inscribed with an iron pencil called a *style* : the letters themselves were anciently termed “ *Feadha*”, woods, from the matter on which they were wrote, as well as because they were the names of trees ; and this was the practise of other nations before paper and parchment were invented.

The discovery made by Dr. RAYMOND above-mentioned, of the identity of the old Celtic and Irish languages, is in my opinion a complete and irrefragable answer to all the objections which this and other writers have made to the early use of letters in Ireland. It was the want of this discovery which occasioned so much uncertainty and disagreement—as the Dr. has observed in another work [1] ——— in CAMDEN, USHER, WARE, and other learned antiquarians ; and which had hitherto prevented a satisfactory account of the Irish history. Of these languages, he adds here “ that they agree as much together, as “ any one of the Greek dialects doth with another, “ and more exactly than the languages of two remote parts in the same kingdom.” The truth
of

[1] End of Raymond's letter to Lord Inchiquin on the Irish language and writings, p. 1.

of the matter with regard to St. PATRICK's teaching the Irish the use of letters seems to be as HARRIS hath given it in his additions to WARE: that the Irish before their conversion were utterly unacquainted with the Latin letters, without the knowledge of which the Bishop considered his new converts were incapable of reading the Scriptures and other books; and consequently could not make such a progress in learning and religion as was necessary to enable them to teach their countrymen. This therefore was the cause which induced that pious apostle to teach the Latin alphabet to his converts; who being well skilled in their native letters became great proficient in the Latin elements. Even if the common opinion of the ancient historians should be admitted, that CADMUS brought the Phenician letters into Greece which were then sixteen in number, before which time the Greeks had none, yet this period being above fifteen hundred years before the Christian æra, and the Phenicians having a great trade with these Western islands—with Ireland much more than Britain—above a thousand years before the Incarnation, as the best authors testify, it seems incredible that the Phenicians should not in all that time have communicated the use of letters to the Irish; and that notwithstanding their continual commerce, the Irish should be ignorant of them, till above four hundred years after CHRIST. Even our SPENSER is of opinion "that Ireland had the use of Letters very anciently and long before England; tho' whether they had them at their first coming into the land, or afterwards, by trading with other nations which had letters, learned them of Them, or devised them amongst themselves, is very doubtful; but that they had letters anciently is nothing doubtful."

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The original and the preservation of their language having been accounted for, it must be observed of it in the general, that it not only answered all the commodious ends of speech, but bestowed all those decorations of harmony and expression which a great genius for poetry or oratory can require, in order to become master of his subject and to charm and captivate his hearers; for it is copious without luxuriance, laconic without obscurity; nervous, figurative, and pathetic. This is so well known of the writings of some of their poets, that a man of taste without understanding the language cannot help admiring, in a translation, the vivacity, the sublimity, and the majesty of the original, though it must be greatly lessened and impaired. Witness the poems of OSSIAN collected in the Highlands or Isles of Scotland, translated from this language, and published about a year ago. Whether these poems were originally composed there, or in Ireland, — and it is most natural to suppose the last, for reasons which I have given the world in another place [*m*] — is not material to the present purpose. The language is that of Ireland, and its energy and sublimity is very conspicuous through the translation. But this original language, through a great length of time and an intermixture with Danes and Britons, is so much declined within these seven hundred years past, and differs so much from that which is commonly spoken, that scarce one in an hundred of the native Irish can read, write, or understand it. It is therefore to be looked for only amongst their early poets and their antiquarians, and not among the common people; of whom it is said, that the province of Ulster has the right phrase, but not the pronunciation; Munster the pronunciation, but not the phrase; Leinster has neither; and Conaught both. The famous

[*m*] Remarks on the Hist. of Fingal, &c. 1762.

famous British antiquarian Mr. LHUD hath told us, that by collating the languages he found one part of the Irish reconcilable to the Welsh, and by a diligent perusal of the New Testament and some manuscript papers, he had a satisfactory knowledge as to the affinity of the other part with the old Spanish, of which he has given many instances : And the conclusion he draws from it is to the purport abovementioned, that the first inhabitants of Ireland were Celtes who came from Gaul and thence into Britain, and Scythians who passed thither from some part of Spain. The former, it is probable, peopled the Northern and Eastern parts of the island to which their navigation was short and safe, and the latter settled in the West and South. And this accounts for the diversity of manners and dialects between the inhabitants of the one and the other part ; which was common to all the other nations of Europe, and which can be owing to nothing else but the different colonies they were first peopled with.

Learning.

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It is impossible to believe that learning and science of any kind should flourish, when the world itself was in its infancy : and therefore tho' we should allow—as I think we must—that the use of letters and arts was near as early in Ireland as in any other European country, yet the philosophy, learning, and religion which the historians boast so much of, from the first settlement of the Spanish colony in this island, may be justly doubted of, if not absolutely denied. There is an error indeed which is common, not to them only, but to all writers of this sort ; which is, that either they do not attend to, or at least they do not mark in their writings, the progression of learning and manners in the nations of which they write. Thus for want of marking this progression, when the Irish historians give such pompous accounts as they do of the great learning of their first progenitors,

progenitors, at a time that we are morally certain there was but little learning in the whole world, other people are naturally enough led to believe, that all which they say of this kind is vain and fabulous. Had they contented themselves with telling us, "that from their commerce with the Phœnicians and Egyptians in Spain, the colony which came from thence into Ireland had advantages, skill, and science superior to the other Celtic nations," which in the course of some ages "pushed their learning to the highest pitch that Heathen lights could afford;" and after the establishment of Christianity, "that Ireland became the emporium of knowledge and the sanctuary of liberty to the Western world;" this would easily have gained credit with impartial people; and if it was disputed or denied by others, it might without much difficulty be proved. But when it is said "that, in the infancy and most confused state of their government, they never sunk into ignorance or barbarity," and without marking with precision the progression of letters, or distinguishing the periods of which they speak, when "the excellency of their musick, their philosophy, their poetry, their constitutions of government, and in short, the knowledge and sciences of the great ancients" are founded so very high by these writers, indifferent people will suspect that their "*amor patriæ*" has tempted them to transgress the limits of truth. Therefore in giving an account of the learning of these people, I would be understood to carry the date of it no higher than a little before the Christian æra. My own countrymen may think that this is much too high, and the Irish will say that it is not high enough: but I write for the sake of truth and of instruction, and not for the sake of pleasing either the one or the other nation.

The Roman writers, it must be owned, in the first age of Christianity have called the Irish barbarous,

barous, unpolished, and ignorant of all virtues. But in answer to this it must be observed, that they stiled every nation barbarous and unpolished who had not been cultivated by their discipline. Many of our own writers have fallen in with this humour very absurdly, and taken them at their word. Even CAMDEN has said, that there never was in Europe any knowledge of polity, or civilized manners, or of letters, but where the Romans governed. But this, if I may be allowed to say it of so great an authority, is talking at random, and carrying the matter much too far; in the last particular especially. I say it however on the testimony of PEZRON [n], who tells us that they contemned other nations and esteemed all people Barbarians that were not Greeks or Romans; tho' they ought to have called to mind, that they themselves not long before were treated in the same manner. Since therefore they value themselves too much to believe, or have forgot, or rather perhaps been ignorant of the obligations they laid under to those whom they have called Barbarians, it is fit posterity should know it. Even their language which they boasted so much of, a great part of it came neither from them nor the Grecians, as they have fancied, but was taken from the Celtæ or Gauls. The Latin names of the days of the week are all taken from them, of which in another place he gives the proofs. But further it may be observed, that the Romans were far from being curious enquirers into the the history of the nations which they conquered, beyond the pale of the Grecian states. Witness the very strange and romantic account which the accurate TACITUS has given of the Jewish nation: and when a people so well known have been so grossly misrepresented by such an able historian, what good account can be expected

[n] Antiq. of all nations, &c. p. 181.

spected of a Northern nation in the extremity of the West, where not a single Roman ever set his foot?

DR. RAYMOND, who with regard to Ireland is a much better authority than CAMDEN, hath told us [o], that there is no other nation in the world, that can shew clearer proof of their antiquity; history, and succession of their kings; for at least two thousand years. But should this author be suspected of partiality, MR. LHUYD the British antiquarian must stand clear of that suspicion; and in the preface to his Irish Vocabulary, he acknowledges "that it is one of the most ancient and best preserved languages in the West of Europe; that it is better situated for being preserved than any other; and that he published this work; among other reasons, that men of learning and other gentlemen might be the better able to read the Irish poetry, history, and laws, which are still in being, and ought never to be lost; and the former of which he found to be as valuable, as that of any other language in the same early age." Howsoever our Antiquarian might be qualified to judge of this, I presume nobody will doubt the capacity or authority of the Poet SPENSER; who says "that he had caused divers of the compositions of their bards to be translated to him that he might understand them; and surely they favoured of sweet wit and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornaments of Poetry, yet were they sprinkled with some pretty flowers of their natural device; which gave good grace and comeliness unto them [p]."

About the period which I have mentioned, it may probably be truly said, that the learning and sciences of the Irish consisted in the study of their laws and constitution of government, in perfecting

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themselves

[o] Introduction to the history of Ireland, p. 2.

[p] Spenser's works, p. 15, 8vo. edit. 1715.

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themselves in the military art, and in philosophical researches. This in process of time, and particularly in the second century, became the study of their princes and legislators, as it had been before of their Druids and Philosophers ; of those in short who were governors, and of those whose business it was to instruct and advise them : and as such subjects received the most lasting impressions from the power of words and harmony of numbers, so a thorough knowledge of the arts of Poetry and Musick was absolutely necessary, and encouraged to a degree of extravagance. It was therefore incumbent on all persons of rank to study these arts, deemed of divine original, with the greatest care and application ; because an ignorance in these only, was judged a sufficient objection to a man's elevation to any important services or dignities in the state, let his advantages of birth or fortune be ever so great. The professors of arts and sciences, whether learned or mechanical, were confined to their particular functions from father to son in the same family. This is not only true of their Lawyers, Physicians, Heralds, and Artizans, but likewise of their Fileahs or Philosophers, Musicians or Bards. As wise an institution as this is thought by some of their best writers, and as wise as it certainly was in those arts which required nothing but knowledge and experience, which every family might communicate to their children, as in Law, Heraldry, Mechanicks, and perhaps Physic, yet surely in those arts which depended chiefly, if not solely, upon genius, such as Poetry, Music, and Mathematicks, it was highly ridiculous the professors should be hereditary, unless genius could be ensured or entailed in families. The institution however, it seems, was not so absolutely unalterable, as not to allow extraordinary merit its full flight upon some occasions. But be this as
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it will ; perhaps Ireland is the only country which ever made history and the learned professions a national cause of the utmost importance to the state.

The Bards, which were an inferior order to the Druids, were as well their historians as their philosophers and their poets : for before the invention and the usage of letters, verse committed to memory was in every nation the only kind of record ; and PHERECYDES, who did not live 'till an hundred years after HOMER, is reported to have been the first who wrote in prose. What TACITUS says of the ancient Germans, was no doubt true of their brethren in Ireland, " that they had no annals or records but what were in verse". We are told that in ancient times, as old as the days of the famous Titans, the Curetes, who were their sages and philosophers, preserved the remembrance of their birth, their successions, their wars, and their great actions intermixed with some fables, by verses and poems, which they could say exactly by heart ; and which they communicated to ORPHEUS and SANCHONIATHON, who both wrote their accounts of them thirteen hundred years before the Christian æra. If this was a practice so very ancient, it is no wonder that it should be followed by all the nations of old. Neither is it any wonder in my opinion, if the Phenicians wrote history in such an early period, who had great traffick with all these Western islands a thousand years before the incarnation, that they should teach the use of letters to the Irish : the wonder would be on the other hand if they did not. But to return. As the Bards were the only people who delivered down historical knowledge in the early ages, so the colouring and fiction natural to poetry introduced that load of fable which we meet with not only in the Irish but in all other ancient history.

“ The wonderful tales which they told, and the melody with which they accompanied them, made these people the delight of the simple ages : and their knowledge of things both natural and divine, gave them a great ascendant over the spirit and belief of their contemporaries. A man who has it in his power to charm our ears, entertain our fancies, and instruct us in the history of our ancestors, who informs his wondering audience of the secret composition and hidden harmony of the universe, of the order of the seasons and the observation of days, such a man cannot miss of esteem and attention [a].” That this was the conduct of the ancient Irish appears from the testimony of all their writers.

Not only their Druids, but their Bards, who were also their philosophers and historians, were endowed by the government and chief families ; and that they might not be under the necessity of attending to the cares of any other than literary occupations, they were provided for in the most ample manner : for, besides occasional benefactions, they were allowed a sufficient patrimony in fee, which was to continue hereditarily in their families from age to age. It is highly probable, that, as Ireland had the use of arts and sciences, and was known by its commerce earlier than the British isles, frequent recourse was had hither for instruction in them, by its neighbours in the heathen as well as in the Christian times. A passage in DIODORUS SICULUS, quoted by Dr. SMITH in his history of Cork, in which there is an account of a northern island, little less than Sicily, situated over against the Celtæ, seems to warrant this conjecture. “ The account is, that it is fruitful, pleasant, and dedicated to APOLLO ; that that God for the space of nineteen years used to come and converse with them ;

[a] Life of Homer, p. 104.

them; and, which is more remarkable, they could, as if they had the use of telescopes, shew the moon very near them, and discover therein mountains, &c. They had a large grove and temple of a round form to which the priests frequently resorted with their harps to chaunt the praises of APOLLO their great Deity. They had a language of their own, but some Greeks had been in the island, and presented valuable gifts to this temple with Greek inscriptions on them; and one ABBARIS, who became afterwards a disciple of PYTHAGORAS, went hence into Greece and contracted an intimacy with the Delians". This is the passage as he hath extracted it, and his observations on it are these. "The situation of this island opposite to the Celtæ who were the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain, its being compared to Sicily in size, its being dedicated to APOLLO, that is the sun, which the Irish worshipped, the description of their temples and the mention of their harps, these are all so many concurring circumstances, which seem more than probable that this could be no other than Ireland: And if the learned of this island, who were then the ancient Druids of it, could as with telescopes shew the moon nearer, it may be supposed that they had made a greater progress in those sciences than is generally imagined. It is also very remarkable that they have a tradition at Lismore, where was anciently a celebrated school, of several Greeks having studied there in former times. It is moreover to be observed, that the nineteen years converse with APOLLO which is the cycle of the sun, the notion of the moon's opacity and of its mountains, rocks, &c. shew them to have been no bad astronomers." It must be not concealed however, that this passage from DIODORUS is quoted also by MR. ROWLAND in his history of Anglesea, and applied by him to that island: and yet that island is so

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much inferior to Sicily in extent, as that it does not seem probable to be meant in it ; and the passage is applied undoubtedly with greater reason to Ireland, of which it appears to be an exact description.

Besides the school of Lismore there were anciently many others, of that sort which are properly called Academies, in which all kind of sciences as well as languages were taught ; and to which the British, Saxons and Gauls, as well as Irish, resorted for their learning. There is no account of any so early as that of Lismore ; and next to that the most ancient and eminent was at Ardmagh where St. PATRICK built a city, and where the chief study of learning was afterwards held ; and the names of some that were readers there in the time of the Danes, we are told by Sir J. WARE, are yet extant, as relicks of its ancient splendor. The academy at Clonard was founded by FINAN, who flourished in the year five hundred and thirty, about an hundred years after the introduction of Christianity : and we may form some Idea of the state of it from the vast concourse of foreigners that resorted to it. Our venerable BEDE acknowledges (b), “ that many of the English nation of all ranks and denominations in the time of Bishop FINAN, leaving their own native country retired to Ireland, that they might devote themselves in a more effectual manner, either to the reading and studying divinity, or to a more strict and continent life. Those of a more active genius frequented the schools, receiving instructions with pleasure, and pursuing the knowledge of divinity with unwearied diligence. All these the Irish readily and chearfully entertained, maintaining them at free cost, procuring for them such books as were necessary to the prosecution of their studies, and defraying the expences

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(b) History Eccles. lib. iii. c. 27.

of their education." They not only taught at home, but they sent their missionaries into the continent, set up schools in those parts, and laid the foundation of the most flourishing universities in Europe. In short Ireland was the prime seat of learning to all Christendom, and there our ALFRED, and other princes had their education. But the incursion of the Danes in the eighth century, and the series of war between them and the Irish for almost three hundred years, put an end to the cultivation of arts and sciences. It is not therefore till more modern times, in the year thirteen hundred and thirteen, that we hear of any more academies or Schools, when the Archbishop of Dublin applied to the Pope for a bull for founding an University of scholars at Dublin, which on his death in the same year was renewed and founded by his successor: the statutes of which are given us by Sir J. WARB. But the University, for want of sufficient maintenance, by degrees came to nothing. The same fate, and for the same reason, had another erected at Tredagh, now called Drogheda, by authority of Parliament in the year thirteen hundred and sixty-five, and endowed with the privileges enjoyed at Oxford. The honour of the University of Dublin was at length restored by Queen ELIZABETH, of which I have given a sufficient account already.

As the Britons and Hibernians had the same original, so in their religion it is probable they were not very different. But as the Druids, who had almost the sole management of all public affairs in these islands, never committed any of their polity to writing, at least in legible characters, there is very little handed down concerning the religion of these ancient people. This much however seems to be pretty clear, that it had a near resemblance, if it was not the very same, with the principles and the worship of the Gauls their progenitors, deduced from those of the

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old Celtæ. What this original Celtic religion was, we learn not only from the Irish history, but from the concurrent testimony of foreign authors also, that it was the same with that of the old patriarchs. They worshipped one supreme being, not in temples but in groves; which being open at the top and sides, were in their opinion more acceptable to the divine and unconfined being whom they adored. They believed a future state of rewards and punishments suitable to their behaviour here: they offered victims to the Deity, and celebrated some festivals in honour of him; and in most things observed a great simplicity in their religious rites. This is a short and concise system, which it is probable the old Celtæ brought with them from Gaul into Britain, and which came thence with the first inhabitants into Ireland; 'till the fair face of religion became clouded and obscured, as well as in other nations, by Idolatry and impious rites.

There are many remains of ancient altars still to be seen in many parts of the island; which from the rude unhewn stones with which they were built, and which from the manner in which they are placed, afford an almost certain conjecture that they were intended for sacrifice; agreeable to the antediluvian practices founded upon ABEL's offering the firstlings of his flock. There is a passage in the book of Exodus which countenances this conjecture. "If thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for, if thou lift thy tool upon it, thou has polluted it." This is probably a repetition of the old original law, which the Patriarchs no doubt obeyed, and which the nations descended from them very naturally followed in imitation of their example. These altars therefore, upon this supposition,

supposition, are too great a mark of the origin and antiquity of the first inhabitants of this country to be contradicted ; notwithstanding the prevailing humour of calling it in question here in England. But to these may be added many columns or pillar stones, which are generally at no great distance from the altars, usually from six to nine feet high, and about ten feet in circumference ; which are supposed, like those mentioned in Scripture to have been erected either as memorials or records to perpetuate the remembrance of some great transaction, or as places of private worship. Of the first sort are the pillars of RACHAEL and ABSALOM, and of the latter is JACOB's pillar. There are likewise heaps of coped stones dispersed in several parts ; some of them small and others extremely large, which seem to have been applied to different uses. The former are supposed to have been originally the graves of men ; according to a custom which prevailed among the Israelites mentioned in the book of JOSHUA. The larger sort are thought to have been either the burial places of some great commanders, like the funeral pile of HECTOR, or — in my opinion more truly from the pillars near them — as the monuments of ancient sacrifices, the positive rites of religion and worship in the early times ; which were principally instituted for the establishment of covenants and federal sanctions both public and private, like that between LABAN and JACOB mentioned in holy writ.

There is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that the old Celtæ, who came into Britain in a very early age after the dispersion of mankind and thence into Ireland, might have brought with them an imitation of this primitive pattern, as well as the language, and have derived the custom of heaping stones from one and the same original ; the patriarchal practise founded on the statues of the sons of

of NOAH. It must be observed that MR. ROWLAND [c] has judged it to be unreasonable to suppose that the larger heaps or carneadds, with their standing pillars that they have generally near them, are any other than the remaining marks and evidences of that religious ceremony and custom recorded by MOSES in the case of LABAN and JACOB, and practised also in other countries. The reader shall hear how he establishes this opinion. "In the first place, the adjustment of personal and provincial rights and properties, by so sacred and binding an establishment as this seems to have been, was as necessary, and consequently as likely, to have been conveyed into and made use of among these communities and settlements, as in those countries where MOSES has so particularly described it. In the next place, why should these heaps and carneadds agree so exactly in their make and positions with the description that MOSES gives of the others in the land of Haran? And how should the columns and pillar stones be placed generally near their heaps, as those described by MOSES were, if both the customs did not proceed from one and the same original, the patriarchal practice?"

But this patriarchal way of worship, the old historians of Ireland inform us, lasted no longer there than 'till the hundredth year after the arrival of the Spanish colony, when, in conformity to the customs of other nations, idolatry was introduced; in which they probably made use of the same altars for their bloody expiatory sacrifices. In these days of heathenism they worshipped BELUS or BEL, as the ancient Britons also did, as God of the sun or fire; as well as the Gods of mountains and rivers. They worshipped the God BEL by consecrated fires on every first day of their summer; and in conformity

mity to this custom, their first day of May is at this time called "Bell-tinne", or the fire of BEL. Though we are told by CAESAR and other writers, that the Deities of the Gauls and Britons were much the same, which were likewise those of the Irish, and that the Druids had the direction of all religious concerns among the former, yet it appears from some of the old Irish records, that their Druids had not so much power and authority as the others in Gaul and Britain; that they were less scrupulous in the ancient rules of their profession; and that they committed many of their mysteries and observations to writing: but then it was in obscure characters unknown to the vulgar, which was much the same as trusting them to tradition among themselves. Of the works of these Druids, supposed by St. PATRICK to be dedicated to the service of idolatry, no fewer than an hundred and eighty tracts, we are told, were at his instance committed to the flames. This was the first destruction of the remains and monuments of learning in that unfortunate island, owing equally to zeal and ignorance.

There is a passage in the "Enquiry into the Life of HOMER" which confirms this account of the Irish Druids. The polite and ingenious author of that work, speaking of the ancient kingdoms of Assyria, Egypt, and Phenicia, tells us, that a great part of the administration having been brought into the hands of the sacred order, they took all possible methods to keep up their authority, and aimed at nothing more than the raising their reputation for wisdom and knowledge. This rendered them at first envious of their discoveries, and then at pains to find out methods how to transmit them to their descendents without imparting them to the vulgar. Here then was the origin of allegory and fable;—nor did they stop at this, but as a second wrapper, and a remedy against the growing knowledge

knowledge of the country, they invented or borrowed a new character for writing these allegories, which they called HOLY LETTERS, because they must be known by none but the priests, nor used by them but in divine matters.—It is true there was as yet no separation of wisdom : the philosopher and the divine, the legislator, and the poet were all united in the same person ; and silence and superstition made a necessary part of their institutions [d].” It hath already been observed, that the Celtiberi who came into Ireland from Spain, had an early commerce with the Phenicians, whose Druids Dr. BLACKWELL speaks of in this passage ; and from them this custom and this art of writing—practised by the Druids neither of Gaul nor Britain——might be derived. That this custom was in Ireland is further confirmed by WARE, who says that, besides the vulgar character, the ancient Irish used divers occult forms and arts of writing, which they called OGAM, wherein they writ their several concerns ; of which character he found very much in an ancient parchment book which he had.”

The name of their Ecclesiasticks was derived from the Celtic word “ Deru,” which signifies an oak ; either because their dwellings and temples were in groves of those trees, or because the mistleto, which grows upon the oak, was looked upon among them as a very sacred thing, and the greatest blessing the Gods could give them. The account which we have from CAESAR [e], of their office, order, learning, and jurisdiction, shews an exact conformity between the Celtic and Phenician Druids abovementioned. He tells us “ that they have a superintendent or head Druid to whom they are all subject, and upon whose decease the most worthy succeeds him ; but if there happen to be several candidates,

[d] Enquiry into the life of Homer, p. 83, 84.

[e] Comment. lib. vi. cap. 8.

dates, the election is decided by a majority of votes, and sometimes by the sword. Once a year they have a general rendezvous at a consecrated place set apart for that purpose, which lies in the midst of Gaul; whither all such flock as have any controversies to decide, and submit to their decrees. This discipline, it is thought, was first instituted in Britain, and from thence transferred to Gaul; because those who desire to be perfect masters of their art took a voyage thither to learn it. But with all due submission to so great an authority, it seems to me very absurd to suppose, that as the Britons, by his own and by all other accounts, were originally inhabitants of Gaul, they should be more perfect in their notions and principles of religion than the people from whom they sprung. It appears more probable that the Britons had learned this system from their descendents the Irish, communicated to them by their new countrymen the Spaniards; who, according to most historians, were possessed of all the virtues of the ancient Celtic nation, and among whom that religion particularly prevailed.

The Druids were not only at the head of religion, to whom belonged the care of their public and private sacrifices and the interpretation of their mysteries, but they were held in such great veneration among the people, that they had also the arbitration of all their differences. They not only presided at their religious rites, but no public transaction passed without their approbation, nor was the greatest malefactor put to death without their consent. Whatever offence was committed among the people, whether it related to life or property or possession, these were the judges that were to determine: and whosoever refused to submit to their determination, whether he was lord or vassal, they excluded from partaking of their public worship. They were not only the most noble and considerable people of their country,

country, to whose care was committed the education of their youth and the king's and prince's children, but as it was a notion prevalent in those times that they had a communication with the Gods by way of divination, soothsaying, and the magic art, so the ancients esteemed them as magicians and enchanters, of which there are many instances in the Irish history. To them also was ascribed the knowledge of the stars, of nature, and philosophy; which entitled them to the profession of astronomers, physicians, and legislators. In short they were held in such esteem in those dark and simple ages, and their authority was so great, that it frequently exceeded that of their Sovereigns themselves. A late Irish writer, already mentioned, hath told us that this prostitution of their liberties never prevailed to so high a degree in Ireland as in other Celtic countries; which he attributes to the constant use of letters among the people, and to the free and happy genius of the laity for examining into the reason of things. It is certain that there were some dawnings of a noble spirit of liberty and of sound philosophy there, before the introduction of Christianity; which exerted itself in opposition to their absurd and corrupt system of idolatry and polytheism. But what the particular religion of this country was, more than paganism in the worship of BEL and the Gods of mountains and rivers, there are no remains which enable us to discover.

Tho' the whole island was not converted to christianity till about the year four hundred and thirty by St. PATRICK, yet it is a great error to suppose, as many do, that there were no body of Christians here before that period. This is not however a proper place for the discussion of that point, and the reader must be referred for it to the history. It will be sufficient to observe here, that tho' the Christian religion had got footing in this island in
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some particular places, yet the generality of the people continued under paganism, 'till St. PATRICK and his coadjutors by their zeal and diligence converted all the Irish. So rapid a progress was hardly ever known in any other land. The country was filled with bishops, priests, and religious houses: the monks dispersed themselves into every corner; and no place was more celebrated for the sanctity and learning of its several monastic orders. The retreats which they pitched upon, they cleared and cultivated with their own hands; they fasted and prayed without intermission, and preached more by their example than their precept. Hence the name of the "Sacred Island," or the Island of Saints, was given to it. There were no less than three hundred and sixty monasteries, abbeys, and other religious houses, built and founded in it; besides many others that were erected in the infancy of their Christianity, and afterwards converted into parish churches.

The religion of those times, from the reception of the gospel 'till the reformation, was, according to the Archbishop USHER, "in substance the very same with that which now is maintained therein." It must be observed that he speaks here of the fundamental points of doctrine that are in controversy between us and the church of Rome at this day, and not of matters of inferior note; much less of ceremonies and such other things as appertain to the discipline of the church. In these, I believe, Ireland conformed generally to the customs of Rome; though without that submission to his holiness, 'till the English conquest, which it afterwards acquiesced in. They searched the Scriptures, and from thence drew the rule of their faith and practice: they were strangers to purgatory and prayers for the dead; and had no one general form of divine service: they were ignorant of the mass, and the

the wonderful doctrine of transubstantiation, confession, penance, and the celibacy of the clergy ! their monks were religious indeed, and not merely in name ; far from the pride and idleness and hypocrisy of their successors, they got their living by the labour of their hands. Nay Pope ADRIAN himself, in the instrument of authority which he gave HENRY the Second, to invade and conquer Ireland, alledges, as one of the motives, that he might enlarge the borders of the church ; which plainly shews that it was not then in conformity to the See of Rome. Therefore whatever changes for the better this country might undergo by the English conquest, the change in religion was not one of them ; and Ireland became subject to the papal tyranny and usurpation for several ages, 'till the reformation in England set it free.

Since that time, like England too, it has been divided into Protestants and Papists, though with much less success in renouncing the errors of popery. For the latter have hitherto had so much the ascendant with regard to numbers, that in some counties there are ten or twelve Papists to one Protestant ; and in the extent of many large parishes scarce ten of the latter are to be found. But taking the island in general, the number of Protestants hath encreased so much of late years, that a proportion of three to eight is at this day computed to be the numerical balance between Protestants and Papists in that kingdom. The Papists indeed for the most part are of the lowest rank, yet Papists they are still, under the unbounded direction and government of their priests, who are in general very deficient in learning except in Latin; in which they read a great deal of the lives of their saints, and the fabulous stories of their country. Those among them who are promoted to titular bishopricks are chiefly men of
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good Irish families, but the inferior clergy are from the lowest of the people. For it is no uncommon thing --- as I am informed --- to meet with many boys on the road, under the title of poor scholars, begging for money to buy books; who after getting a very little learning are ordained, and then sent to study their course of philosophy abroad. Their preaching is rather to terrify their people with dreadful stories, than to persuade them by reason or the Scriptures. There are a race of men who, tho' dead in law, yet live, and will live in Ireland as long as their religion lives there; and who, instead of being a clog and incumbrance to the state as they now are, might by some prudent regulations be made of advantage to it. The great sums which their people pay them, and pay them more punctually than they do their rents, considering the number of Priests, Friars, Monasteries, Bishops, and Archbishops, tend to impoverish their laity inconceivably: and if their titular Bishops and Archbishops were removed effectually out of the island, and their Priests were tolerated and paid by the government instead of receiving dues, oblations, or fees from the poor papists, on condition that each of them kept one or two looms at work constantly in their houses, they could have no reason to complain of severities, and it might secure their affections and interests to the state.

The richer and better educated among the laity, are such catholicks as are of that rank in other countries; that is, they conform to the popular superstition, but believe, or at least conjecture, that things are not as they should be. But whatever may be the case with others, of these it may be truly said, that they are every day less violent in their opinions, and less bigotted than they used to be: and indeed they are generally addicted to the popish religion, not through the force of

Y. opinions and doctrines, so much as from long habit and custom and the prejudices of education. However living so much among the Protestants, and conversing more with them than most Papists do in other countries, has introduced a latitude among them of thinking more charitably of our salvation, and more slightly of the authority and infallibility of the Pope, than any other body of catholicks whatever. The blood which they have lost, and forfeiture of their lands and liberties which has entailed upon them many miseries, have at last pretty well cured them of their political and religious madness: and indeed the greatest part of their gentry, who are distinguished for their fortune or understanding, have within these last threescore years renounced the errors of the church of Rome:

The poor catholicks, who are extremely ignorant indeed, seem, in adhering to their religion, to obey their chief men and heads of families in their neighbourhood rather than their Maker. They treat an oath on a protestant bible as a trifle, and are upon that account become a proverb of reproach: but of all oaths they think themselves most at liberty to take a land oath, as they call it; that is, to prove a deed which is forged for possession of estates, or releases for payment of rent. In ancient time, their manner of swearing in any debate before their Brehons, was by the head, hands, life, or health of their lord or prince; which is a custom that seems to have been derived from the Egyptians, as we may conclude from JOSEPH's swearing by the life of PHARAOH. This was in use also among the Christians of the East and West, and continued longer perhaps in Ireland than other places. At this time, in general they look upon no oath as binding but on a crucifix, or something in the shape of a cross, especially

if it is of iron ; the putting the fingers only across will sometimes answer the end. It might therefore be no bad expedient, in order to come at the truth from these people, if in their own, and in our courts of justice, after the oath had been administered in the usual form, and with much more solemnity than it is, they were also sworn upon a crucifix before they were permitted to give evidence. They have a great opinion of holy wells, rocks, and caves, which have been the cells or receptacles of reputed saints. They are in general very regardless of death ; and though not so much as in former times, yet still addicted greatly to superstition. They are extremely illiterate, but yet they are sensible of the hardships which their priests and popery bring upon them : for though they cannot see these things in speculation, yet they can feel ; and as their spiritual taxes are numerous, and in proportion to their little substance are very heavy, so they perceive how they are fleeced to support their spiritual fathers in a dominion over them.

Whatever low opinion we entertain in England of the understanding of these people—and a very erroneous opinion it is — it must be owned that they are more docile, and less obstinate and violent in their natural disposition, than either the Welch or Scotch ; and had the same care and application been used to convert the Irish, which we must be sensible took place in Wales and Scotland, their religious differences in Ireland would have been long since extinguished ; the wars and massacres and banishments which flowed from them would have been prevented ; and the many millions which it hath cost England for their reduction would have been saved. But that opportunity and some others, since have been lost, not only to the prejudice of the protestant religion, but to the diminution of

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the greatness and the strength of Ireland, and in its consequence of Britain. The business now of the legislature is to make the best use they can of the means that are in their power to remedy this evil ; and 'till it can be remedied—which will require time and prudence, as well as zeal — not to turn the discouragements which the laws have laid the Papists under, against the public interest ; and not to make them, as they are now, less useful subjects than they might be. For instance : Whereas permanency of tenure, stable property, and even durable security in land or money are at present prohibited the Irish Papists by law, which obliges them to keep their lands waste instead of improving them, (in order to prevent, as much as possible, any temptation to leases in reversion, which Protestants only can take) would it not be more for the public interest, to allow all those who would take an oath of allegiance to the government, the same privileges which are allowed to Papists in Protestant governments abroad ; the same in short which King WILLIAM left them, so much to his own glory, and so much to the peace and happiness of this country ? By giving them an interest in lands, they would not only be led from that lazy depopulating Tartar life of pasturage, which would be evidently for the public interest, but it would also be a security to government, in their having something to lose by a change of state ; and if we permitted them to have a loan in the hands of government, they would have something to lose by a change of constitution. The people of Ireland therefore have acted as impolitically with regard to the Papists, as the people of England have done with regard to Them: they have both pursued the business of restraint, because they had power and resentment on their side, beyond its proper limits, to their own apparent disadvantage.

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It is high time that both should see their error, and correct it.

The religion which has continued to be established among the Irish from the accession of Queen ELIZABETH, in point of doctrine, discipline, and worship, is exactly the same as the Church of England; which in all those respects may be said without any partiality, to be the best and purest religion established in the world. Here also as in England, through weakness of mind or prejudice of education are dissenters of all denominations: and their number is not inconsiderable. But it would be well for the safety and prosperity of this island, if the whole body of Protestants in the several counties would unite with zeal and firmness in the support and encrease of the Protestant working schools that have been erected; in order to extirpate the Popish principles from the minds of every rising generation, and to inure them to labour and honest industry. For though favour and indulgence should be allowed to Papists, upon the principles of policy as well as religion, yet upon the same principles it will appear, that the interest of Protestants should never be out of sight. The institution of these schools by the Royal Charter, will be far more productive of national morality, and are more consistent with the meek and benevolent temper of Christianity, than restrictive penal statutes. Besides, they will abolish gradually in their natural course, the great number of Popish holidays, on which some hundred thousand working hands are kept idle, and the labour and profit of them lost to the publick stock for a considerable part of the year, the very harvest not excepted. This damage, little as it is observed, upon a fair calculation appears an astonishing drawback from the wealth and strength of the nation; which, as it grows chiefly from labour, so it must languish with the decrease of it.

Government. The government of Ireland was at first divided, after the manner of the ancient Gauls, into several petty states, with a head or king elected over each of them ; and sometimes they had the chief command over the whole by turns. This was a kind of government which they derived probably from the patriarchs, and was extremely consistent with the essence and genius of true liberty. For when the various necessities of society required a subordination, together with some stated maxims to go by, in order to avoid the promiscuous intercourse and confusion in a state of nature, the people elected the most wise and able to conduct them in times of war, and in more auspicious seasons to protect and govern them. But these several independent states were continually at variance with each other upon many different accounts, as we shall see in the course of their history ; and which is well enough attested, when stripped of all its fable, to ascertain that fact. The people were divided into four ranks or classes ; the first consisted of their great men or nobles, out of which they chose their kings ; the second class contained their druids, bards, and men of letters ; in the third were the tradesmen or common people ; and from all these, the different orders of the soldiery, which composed the fourth class, were taken. We are authorized by LIVY, and by historians much more ancient, to give the title of Kings to such heads or chiefs, though they were probably no other than such as the Indian Kings, or Lords of manors in England ; as Kings of Ophaly, Kings of Limerick, Kings of Cork &c. and the chief monarch himself, to whom these were in a manner subject had no other land at first than he got possession of. Thus the bounds of their territories were every day altered by force ; and every principality was diminished or enlarged, according

to the power and fortune of him that held it. But after the establishment of the Milesian race, the chief in abilities and martial skill of the Royal family was elected to govern the whole nation, with the aid and concurrence of the provincial Kings : however, except in times of war, their power was very limited ; and reverence to the throne was obtained rather through submission to superior power and abilities, than from the terrors of the pomp of magistracy.

There were particular solemn and significant rites at the inauguration of every King in all the provinces of Ireland. The several estates of the country met together at the top of a hill ; and the assembly being full, one of the chief men rose up, and standing in the midst with a strait white wand without any knots in his hand, he advanced to the new elected king and addressed him in this manner : “ Receive the auspicious ensign of your dignity, and remember to imitate in your life and government the whiteness, straitness, and unknottiness of this rod ; to the end that no evil tongue may asperse the candor of your actions with blackness, no corruption pervert your justice, nor any ties of friendship make it partial. Take therefore upon you in a lucky hour the government of this people, and exercise the power given you hereby with all freedom and security.” These words being spoken, he delivered the rod into the king’s hand, and the solemnity was at an end. It may be concluded, I think, with HARRIS, that if these petty kings of provinces were initiated into their respective governments by such ceremonies as these, then the supreme Monarch of Ireland must probably have been inaugurated by more august solemnities ; but whether by unction, or coronation, no monuments remain, more than their constantly wearing a crown in the field of battle, to

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give us any light. These provincial governments were regulated by their own local ordinances ; and the Sovereign, after paying his stipulated tribute to the monarch of Ireland, was scarcely subservient to his authority on any other occasion. He was accountable indeed for the chief part of his conduct to his own constituents ; who always reserved to themselves the power of choosing or deposing their provincial kings. They were obliged however to elect them out of the royal line, and to elect none but such as were of mature age.

The revenue of the monarch was divided into three branches : the first consisted in certain things which the princes or states supplied them with for the support of their household ; such as corn, hay, and cattle, which were usually paid in kind : the second was the produce of the demesne lands of the crown annexed to it for public uses : and the third branch consisted in taxes laid on the people on pressing occasions by the assemblies. Every provincial Sovereign was not only himself a king, but he had as many kings under him as there were septs or heads of families of distinction or estate ; there being no other titles of honour among them ; And these administered justice to all persons belonging to their tribe or district by a privilege that was hereditary ; for which purpose they had each of them their Brehon or lawyer retained in their families, like the stewards of our leet and baron courts. Thus the regal, the noble and the popular orders, had their respective attributes and limitations of power and authority : the two latter chose their own chiefs and deputies, and these last a King out of the royal Milesian family, and no other ; and to prevent the fatal effect of a controverted election, the assembly of Teamer, which I shall presently give an account

count of, chose a "Roydamna" to fill the throne immediately upon the demise or abdication of the reigning prince.

But although they had the outlines of a good constitution in that country, yet it seems as though the prime political powers were never sufficiently ascertained. The election of a Roydamna was no doubt a wise institution; but then in fact this king elect was generally the creature of a faction, and but seldom approved of by the reigning monarch, whose sanction should have been necessary to the election of a Roydamna. So many monarchs could not have fallen by the civil commotions of their successors, as the history will give an account of, if that was not the case. The factions of the Roydamna's, and the too great power of the provincial Sovereigns, rendered their monarchs too weak for the purposes of good government; and when there were no contests of this kind, it was rather perhaps owing to an happy concurrence of incidents, than to the soundness of the constitution. The form of their government was monarchical from the beginning, but at all times under the restraint of popular councils. It was in truth so much under that restraint, that it was too limited and circumscribed to answer the end of such a form. This induced some of their monarchs to remedy this evil, by tempering one kind of power in such a manner with another that the one might not degenerate into tyranny, nor the other run into the extremes of a democracy.

To this end were established three great councils of the nation, held in three different places: the first was a triennial parliament of all the estates assembled at the principal royal seat of Teamor — now corruptly called Tara — in the county of Meath, about that time of the year
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which is now the middle of October ; during which it was death without hopes of mercy, or in the power of the monarch himself to pardon, for any person to wound, assault, or draw upon another attending there, or to be convicted of stealth or robbery. This assembly, which may be called the supreme council of the nation, and which was instituted about six hundred years before the Christian æra, was held for making laws, for reforming abuses, revising and correcting their antiquities, annals, and genealogies ; and either for restoring, or preserving peace and amity with each other, by a solemn festival for seven days together. All the histories and antiquarians speak of this assembly in terms of the utmost respect, and describe the manner of their meeting and feasting in it with great exactness ; which the reader will find in its proper place. The persons who are said to compose it, were the princes, the nobility, the druids, the historians, and the men of learning of all professions, either of physic, law, philosophy, musick, or mathematicks. It appears therefore that though the government was monarchical, yet it was not only elective, but also in some sort aristocratical ; as no laws were made without the consent of this assembly : And tho' their monarchs had the appointment of all the officers civil and military, and had the power to pardon malefactors, yet the militia were in the hands of the general assembly at Teamor ; and the offences committed against private persons at that assembly were exempt from the royal prerogative of being pardoned.

In the other two councils held at Eamania and Cruachain, the subjects principally debated by the members were those of a national police, and related

lated to the tradesmen, artificers, and mechanicks of all sorts ; especially masons, carpenters and smiths, and others essential to the necessities of life ; of which a great number were summoned to attend each assembly. Out of this number, the council, which consisted of the nobility, gentry, and men of learning, elected sixty, who were judged to be most eminent in their occupations ; to whom they gave authority and jurisdiction over all the other tradesmen and artificers throughout the nation, in order to reform any abuses which had been introduced into their several trades, and to suspend those who had been guilty from exercising them again. By this regulation, no tradesman or mechanick could set up or continue an occupation without their licence ; and all of them were subject to an examination of their skill and integrity by these authorised directors.

The government of this island since it came into the hands of the English, hath consisted of a deputy or Lord Lieutenant under the king of Great Britain, and commissioned by him ; and in the absence of the chief governor, usually of the High chancellor, and one or two more, called Lords Justices. The appointments of the Lord Lieutenant had for many years been established at twelve thousand pounds a year : but the late House of Commons thinking this allowance inadequate to the dignity of that high office, and being solicitous to support his Majesty's government with becoming grandeur and magnificence, addressed him in a former session to encrease it to sixteen thousand : “ at the same time expressing the satisfaction which they felt at the pleasing hope, that this augmentation should take place, during the administration of a chief governor, whose many great and amiable qualities, whose wise and happy administration in the government of this kingdom, had universally endeared him to
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the people of Ireland." As becoming as these sentiments were of the liberal spirit and magnanimity of an Irish House of commons, it is hard to say which does the greatest honour to the Earl of HALIFAX, this unanimous resolution in favour of his person and administration, or the emulation of sentiment in his generous refusal of this lucrative advantage during his own government ; " as he could not submit without pain, that the establishment already burdened at his recommendation, should be still further charged for his own particular profit." Much more might have been added in a proper place, but less could not be said even in this ; where I am obliged to mention a transaction between the Parliament and the Lord Lieutenant, which, to the immortal honour of both, so remarkably distinguishes the present period of their history.

Though Lord HALIFAX made " a sacrifice of his private interests to his private feelings," yet the augmentation was made, and has been allowed to all future governors ; and indeed it seems just and necessary. For the authority of a Lord Lieutenant resembles that of a Vice-roy ; having a power from his Sovereign to fill up all offices of magistracy and trust, except very few, and to pardon all other crimes but high treason ; and even murder, which is high treason there, is not excepted ; in short in his authority, jurisdiction, train, splendour, and provision, he comes nearer perhaps to the majesty of a King than any vice-roy in Christendome. There are assistant to him in council, the great officers of the crown, and others of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons ; much in the same manner as the Privy council is formed in England ; and they are nominated by the King, at the recommendation, it may be supposed, of the Lord Lieutenant. Upon his arrival

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at Dublin to take upon him the government, the council being assembled at the Castle in the great council chamber, and with the Lords Justices seated and covered, the letters patent appointing him are publicly read, the Lord Lieutenant standing behind the chair of the Lord Justices uncovered : when this is finished, he takes a solemn oath in a particular form administered to him by the Lord Chancellor or the first in the council present, during which they all stand up ; and the sword, which is to be borne before him, being delivered to him as soon as he is sworn, he is conducted covered to a chair of state, the council sitting down again in their places covered also as before ; and the nobility and gentry who are not of the council, as well as the other spectators, then withdraw. His commission, which is during the King's pleasure, expires usually in three or four years, and sometimes sooner ; and he is seldom resident above six months in two years, the Parliament being summoned only every other winter : the Lords Justices administer the government in his absence, and are each of them allowed an hundred pounds a month for their trouble, by the Lord Lieutenant out of his salary.

In the ancient time, or till the reign of JAMES the First, even perhaps 'till the settlement succeeding the restoration, before which it can scarcely be said in strictness to be brought under due subjection to the crown of England, it seems necessary at the first view, that this great supreme officer should have been an Englishman. But since that time, and especially in the present age, when the case is so much altered with regard to Ireland, governed by English laws, guarded by an English fleet and army, many Popish families of distinction being turned protestants, and when the greatest property of the lands and cities are in the hands of the English,

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it has been thought reasonable by many people, that Ireland should now be governed by its own members, or by those who are peculiarly interested in its prosperity. As reasonable however as it may appear to Us at this distance, yet a short acquaintance with the people and state of Ireland, would convince others, I presume, as it did me, that a Lord Lieutenant of birth and property in that kingdom, by views of self interest, alliances, and connexions, would probably split it into factions and cabals and destroy the public peace; nor would it be a measure desired by the men of sense amongst the Irish themselves.

But in order to preserve the impartiality which I profess, it must on the other hand be said, that it is a great detriment to that nation, that the whole appointment of the Lord Lieutenant and his officers is not expended amongst them, and by far the greatest part of it sent to England. To this may be added the inconvenience of appointing three Lords Justices of that country, during the absence of the Lord Lieutenant, instead of one. For having each of them their separate interests, alliances and dispositions, the administration of government must be frequently interrupted; and, if it is not discordant, yet can never be uniform. The ease of the suitors to the state for the dispatch of public business, seems another consideration why the supreme authority that directs it should be in the hands of one: and I believe it will be told posterity with pleasure, how happily for the people of Ireland, the Marquis of KILDARE when he was sole Lord Justice, through the ill health of the other two, administered the government of that kingdom in the year 1756. But what I have mentioned above is not the only detriment which is sustained, by the Lord Lieutenants not residing there the whole time of their commission, and by sending over new governors every
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three or four years, unacquainted with the various humours and interests of the people, rather fearing perhaps than designing the prosperity of its trade, from a foolish prepossession of its disadvantage to the trade and wealth of England; and therefore managing the affairs under their government as may most consist with their interest and credit here. But the greatest detriment of all seems to arise from that emulation in the heart of man, which makes them unwilling to promote or second the laudable undertakings which any of their predecessors have set on foot; from their not residing the whole time of their government, in order to acquire a thorough knowledge of the state and interests of the country; and from their not continuing long enough in their posts to project and finish any great designs in their own time. Indeed if the Lord Lieutenants, and other ministers of state who are sent from England, would purchase, plant, and settle themselves in Ireland, it would be the best expedient that could be devised to promote its grandeur, and to improve and cultivate the country: and in truth most of the noble and great families in it, owe their original to the civil or military employments of their ancestors in that kingdom. But many of these employments being now enjoyed by those who are permitted to live entirely out of it, and none of the Lord Lieutenants and their officers residing here more than about six months in twenty four, the present method of government is not so beneficial to Ireland as it might be wished. Most of these sentiments are authorised by our own countryman SPENCER, who had been himself a Secretary of state in Ireland, and must therefore be allowed to have been a competent judge of these affairs. This however is not a place to enter upon any formal disquisitions of this nature: and yet in this age of improvement and reformation, they seemed too important to be quite omitted.

Beside

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

Beside the Lord Lieutenant, who calls and dissolves the Parliament at his Majesty's pleasure, which meets but once in two years, the Upper house consists of two and twenty spiritual, and at this time one hundred and thirty temporal Lords, exclusive of six popish ones ; many of whom reside always here, and are without a foot of land in that country, and some few—about 20—are peers of the English realm. “ The nobility of Ireland have precedence on all solemn public occasions, except at coronations—which by parity of reason they ought to have—over all the English peers of inferior rank ; and this hath constantly been allowed them by all the kings of England from the earliest notices of record. In all acts of the legislature, the peers of Ireland have been named with this precedence : in all acts of Parliament, the British peers are ever ranked beneath the Irish of superior quality ; and where an English Lord has a superior title in Ireland, he is always styled and ranked by the title of his Irish Honour. Upon the question of place and precedence of the Scotch and Irish nobility here, which was agitated in the time of JAMES the First, that monarch, after a consultation with the heralds, established the following rule : that in England all English earls should take place of all Scotch and Irish peers of that degree, but that both the latter should take place as last earls of England according to their creation ; and that the same should be observed in like manner by all other degrees of nobility, either above or below an Earl : that in Scotland the Scotch peers were to take place first according to their degrees of nobility, then the English, and then the Irish ; and likewise the same in Ireland, where the Irish were to take place first according to their degrees of nobility, then the English, and then Scotch. This order was confirmed by his son CHARLES the First :
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nothing was done to set aside in any succeeding reign, and the peers of Ireland have ever since been maintained in these rights by all the monarchs of England. It was the opinion of DYER and COMPTON, two eminent lawyers in the reign of Queen ELIZABETH, that an Irish peer by the laws of England is not triable here in capital cases : and St. JOHN Solicitor General to CHARLES the First, says, in one of his arguments before the House of Lords, that Ireland being governed by the same laws, the peers there are triable only “ per pares” according to the laws of England. The noble author, to whom I am obliged for this paragraph [f], says, that the only rational way of accounting for a defect of precedents in favour of the Irish peerage, respecting coronations is this ; that there can be no ancient precedents as to that point, because ’till the reign of King HENRY the Eighth, the Kings of England only bore the title of Lords of Ireland, which was erected into a kingdom by an Irish act of Parliament in that reign ; and that in the same reign also, by the same authority, whosoever shall be King of England, is declared to be “ ipso facto” King of Ireland without any further ceremony.”—It must be allowed that this is a rational way of accounting for a defect of precedents in favour of the Irish peers at coronations prior to the reign of that King, but it does by no means account for it at coronations since his time ; and it is surprising that such an author, so accurate and judicious in all other parts of his performance, should account for it in that manner. Of the forty precedents which he hath brought to support the claim of the Irish peerage, thirty of them are since the reign of HENRY the eighth ; and if there were so many of the Irish nobility present, on occasions of royal nuptials, christenings,

Vol. I. K funerals,

[f] Earl of EGDMONT’s father. Question of Precedency of the Irish Peers, *passim*.

funerals, and processions, it is very extraordinary there should be none at coronations ; where, after it was declared a kingdom under one and the same crown, the peers of Ireland seem to have as much right of precedence as on all the other occasions, and to have no more right on these than on that of a coronation : But if there were none, after this great man hath failed, in my opinion, in accounting for it, I shall not presume to offer at it.

“ It does not appear, says the same author, that there ever was any dispute upon the head of precedence between the English and Irish peers for above four hundred years, ’till about the latter end of the reign of Queen ELIZABETH ; when a dispute arising in Ireland, about place, between the Lord AUDLEY second baron in England, and the Irish barons who would not yield it to him, his Lordship applied to the Queen ; whose answer was “ that it was in her power to give him precedence, but it was not in her power to deprive others of it ; and accordingly created him Earl of Castlehaven in Ireland. Though the dignity of the Peerage hath been debased in many reigns, by being conferred upon mean and worthless people of both kingdoms, yet there will be found a great number of families in the Irish peerage, which, without disparagement to that of England, for antiquity of descent, are equal to those of England, or any other peers in Europe. They are also enobled in the same manner as we are in England : their privileges are derived under the same Magna Charta, and their honours from the same princes ; their peerage is taken out under the same great seal, and in the very same terms of expression. As to the fortunes of the nobility to support their dignity, it is a misfortune to that kingdom, that the property of it is divided with a greater inequality than in any other nation that we know : so that notwithstanding the general poverty and distress which the
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body of the people undergo, and the restraints of commerce which prevent their making the most of their estates, yet many of the peers of Ireland are possessed of fortunes suited to the highest degree of quality, and several enjoy properties of great consideration here. Indeed to say the truth, the nobility of Ireland,——excepting four or five of Irish extraction, who themselves are very eminent——are wholly composed of families transplanted from England thither; many of which are either the chief or the younger branches of the greatest houses of Great Britain; such as long before their migration into that kingdom——where they were employed commonly for the service of the English crown and government——had enjoyed the highest offices of the English and Scottish states, and had frequent summons to their Parliaments.”

The House of Commons of Ireland consists of three hundred members, chosen out of the counties, cities, and boroughs, in the same manner that they are in England: but there is this material difference in their constitution of it, that no qualification of estate is necessary for a seat in that House; and when a member is once elected, he is elected for the King's life * or his own, unless the King should choose to dissolve the Parliament; which, since this custom took place, has been very rarely if ever done. If therefore a man has interest enough to get himself elected in any borough or county, either by his personal acquaintance, by recommendation, or by his money, it is not material whether he has a foot of land in the kingdom, or is worth a shilling more than his election cost him: and yet with all this temptation to venality, or to mean, in-

K. 2

direct,

* This great imperfection in the constitution of the Irish House of Commons is happily remedied by the ever-memorable statute, of the 7th of George the 3d. chap. 3. which limits the duration of Parliaments to eight years or four sessions.

direct, and unworthy practices, he is secure of a seat in Parliament for his own life or the King's : Thus the last Parliament continued for three and thirty years. Indeed the struggle is generally so great — owing principally to that circumstance of duration, without doubt — that a man of a small fortune has but little chance of succeeding under a contest ; unless he is powerfully supported, or is foolish enough to risque the whole of it at an election. The present Parliament intended to remedy these absurdities, and to bring the constitution of their House of commons to the same form with that of Great Britain. But to speak more truly, I should say that the PEOPLE intended it ; who being naturally fond of a frequent exertion of their power, and of the jollity, the cunning, and the money stirring at elections, obliged all the candidates for a seat in this Parliament, at every independent borough through the kingdom, to take an oath that if they were elected they would each of them vote for such an act. Accordingly in their first session, the heads of a bill were brought in, and passed the House for this purpose ; limiting the duration of Parliaments to seven years, and requiring the same estates which are required in England, as a qualification for a seat in the House of commons. These heads, according to the usual course of Parliamentary business in that kingdom, were with little or no alteration certified over to England in due form, by the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish council. But considering the violent, irregular, and anticonstitutional method, in which these heads of a bill were obtained, or rather forced from the House of commons, it is no wonder that the King and the English council should reject it.

There is indeed another material difference in the constitution of their Parliament from ours, and which makes the alterations just mentioned not so necessary

necessary nor important as they would otherwise be ; which is, that the Irish Parliament has little other privilege, as a legislative power, than putting a negative upon any law which comes to them from the King and council of England to be passed, unless it is the same which hath already passed in Ireland, or with such alterations only to which they have no objection. Though the privy council are not deemed an estate, or a necessary branch of the constitution, yet to say the truth, the Lord Lieutenant and this council have the chief, and almost the whole legislative power. For by POYNING'S law in the reign of HENRY the seventh, — which will be hereafter mentioned — and which made a great alteration in the constitution of that kingdom, there can be no Parliament held in Ireland, 'till the governor and privy council have informed the King of the causes of holding it, untill they have specified the bills that are intended to pass into laws in that session, and untill the King and his council in England have given their approbation. By this means the power of framing acts to pass in Parliament in Ireland, was vested in the King and his two councils, and only a negative was left to the two Houses of Parliament ; which is the reverse of the British constitution. But as many events might happen during the time of Parliament necessary to be provided for, which yet might not be thought of at the time when it was summoned, therefore that part of the law which allowed of no acts to be passed which had not been specified before the Parliament was held, was afterwards repealed ; and the governor and council, during the sitting of the Parliament, might certify to the King under the great seal, of Ireland, any other bills which they thought expedient should be passed into laws for the better government of the realm. The constitution still standing thus, it proves what I said, that the Lord Lieute-

nant and council have the chief legislative power. But this will appear still more clearly, when I have explained the whole process of an act of Parliament.

Though no bill can take its rise either in the House of Lords or Commons, as we have seen, yet when any matter is thought to be a proper subject for a law, it has been long indulged to both Houses, and with great reason surely to propound it under the title of heads of a bill; and if it passes that House in which it was moved, it is sent to the Lord Lieutenant and council, to be certified in due form under the great seal to England. Here it is again debated, altered, or rejected; but if it is approved of for a law, the former title is dropped and it is moulded into the form of a bill, and in that form transmitted by the Lord Lieutenant and council to the King. In England it undergoes another deliberation by his Majesty and his council: and if it comes back at all, or comes back with any alterations, it is sent by the Lord Lieutenant to the House in which it took its rise, to receive or to reject it; but not the least alteration can be made in it when it returns from England. If it has had no alterations there, or in their own council, or none but such as the House approve of where it first arose, it is passed by them, and sent to the other House with a desire that they would concur with them in it, and if it passes that House also, it then receives from the Lord Lieutenant the royal assent.

This being the process of an act of Parliament in that kingdom, does it not appear evidently, as I said at first, that the chief governor and his council have the principal, if not almost the whole legislative power? Either House of Parliament has a negative upon the bills passed in the other; or when their own bills return to them mutilated by the Irish or English council in a manner they disapprove of;

of; and it is almost all the power they have. But the Lord Lieutenant and council, when the heads of a bill are sent to them, can alter or suppress it; and the Lords or Commons who have framed them — except such as are of the council — know no more why the bill is altered or rejected, than the King himself who never heard of it. Thus the governour and his council, by blocking up the ways of approach, can prevent a communication, if they please between the King and the other parts of the legislature; and the most salutary and essential laws may be denied them, without the knowledge or consent of the King himself. It must be owned that according to the present constitution of their government, which allows only the chief governour and council “to certify to the King the considerations and ordinances which they shall think good to be enacted in the Parliament,” the power above-mentioned is strictly warranted by law; and it was a power, at the time when it was assumed, extremely proper, if not absolutely necessary, to the good government of that kingdom, so much then in the hands of the Irish chiefs: but as both Houses have been indulged with the privilege of framing heads of a bill, whether any such should be in the power of the governour and council totally to reject, is a question which I shall leave to other people to determine.

The legal and spiritual courts are constructed like these of England: in the court of equity, a Lord Chancellor, a Master or rather Keeper of the rolls having no judicial capacity,—and four Masters in chancery: in the King’s bench, a Lord chief justice and two other judges: and in the Exchequer, a Lord chief Baron and two other Barons, with the Chancellor and Treasurer of the Exchequer: in the Common pleas, the same number, with a Lord chief justice,

as in the King's Bench ; and to these four courts may be added a court of Exchequer chamber consisting of the Lord Chancellor, the Lord high treasurer, and vice-treasurers, assisted by the two Chief justices ; a court of Delegates, a court of Admiralty, and a court Martial for the affairs of the army. There are four law terms the same as in England, and five circuits which the Judges go twice every year.

The Primate hath a prerogative, the other Archbishops their metropolitan, and every Bishop his consistory court peculiar to each diocese. The ecclesiastical government is by Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and Deans in cathedral churches ; of which there are but two entire choirs in the kingdom, St. Patrick's and Christ-church, Dublin ; or rather there is but one choir, as it hath been already mentioned, which serves for both those Cathedrals. All the other Deanries are sine-cures in villages, or benefices endowed with lands and tithes. The number of beneficed clergy is computed at about eight hundred ; and near a third of the tithes are improper, and in the hands of laymen and ecclesiastics. There is some little difference between the canons of that church and ours, and the discipline is not exactly similar. The Bishops visit their dioceses annually except every third year, when the Metropolitans visit all their dioceses in their respective provinces ; and instead of options, if any preferments become vacant in the disposal of the Bishop of the diocese during such visitation, the Archbishops collate to them as of their own right for that turn. The Archdeacons, except at Dublin, Lismore, and two or three other places, have lost their jurisdiction ; and there are Archdeaconries, absolute sinecures to the value of a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds a year. In a country where so much popery prevails, this is an irregularity in the church which surely deserves some amendment : and if it was formerly thought expedient to join two

two or three Bishopricks together in order to make a proper provision for the episcopal dignity, it seems as expedient in the present age, if we had the same zeal and spirit, to reduce such immense sinecures which seldom answer any valuable purposes to the church, and to distribute their income among the small livings in their neighbourhood. But there is another circumstance in the ecclesiastical constitution of Ireland yet worse than this, which is their pluralities. As much as I have contended upon other occasions [g] for the necessity of these in England, where the law hath restrained them to two benefices with cure, within the distance of thirty miles from one another, yet the pluralities of Ireland, which are without stint and without measure, except in the Primate's breast, resemble those of Popish times here too much to admit of any excuse; and indeed they call aloud for a reformation. If a man has interest enough to procure four or five livings, he will probably find interest enough to obtain the Primate's consent, and his consent, with a faculty for each, will enable him to hold them all together, though they are situated at the different extremities of the kingdom. Well may the state of the Protestant religion there be very deplorable indeed, when pluralities so indefensible are avowed and authorized! But this is not a place to enlarge upon this subject.

As they had no written Laws in the first age in Ireland, but only custom and tradition, 'till about three hundred years before the Christian æra, so these were sometimes wrested and interpreted, as the traditions of religion were, in order to serve their own particular purposes. When any controversy was to be decided, the Brehon or judge used to sit on a heap of stones on the top of a hill without canopy or covering, and without clerks, registers, or records, or indeed without any formality of a Court of

Laws.

Differtat.
WARE.
SMITH.
HUTCH-
INS.
DAVIES.
NICHOL-
SON.
TAYLOR.

[g] Eccles. History vol. i. p. 473

of Justice; and this afterward came to be called the Brehon law. The greatest crimes were seldom punished otherwise than by fines, of which the judge had the eleventh part for his fees; and theft or robbery, if committed upon any but their own Lords or principal followers, were not in the number of crimes. All such depredations were esteemed clear gains; and castles, if we may give that name to houses made of earth and wattles, were built upon isthmus's and other inaccessible places, to secure the plunder which they had got possession of from one another. Neither was it a matter of reproach, but rather of honour, to be distinguished by a dexterity at this sort of rapine. As odd as this may appear, it was not peculiar to these people in the first and rudest ages, nor even to the Northern nations only, for the learned Greeks were little better; as we may learn from the celebrated poems of HOMER, which contain little else but the plunders of cities, and unjust wars. But as there is a very wonderful mixture in human nature, so amidst all their violence and depredations, there were many virtues of temperance and generosity, and some kind of justice that went along with them.

In the beginning of the middle age, which was about three hundred years before the Christian æra, and which notwithstanding the partial and contradictory accounts of different authors, is the true date of the birth of their laws and learning, and of their forming themselves upon the plan of a wise and well-governed people: I say, at this time their lawgivers and philosophers, having observed the blunders and uncertainties in judicial cases, formed books of juris-prudence which they promulged for the use, as well of the judges, as of the people. But the contest of rival Princes soon after overturning the foundation of the constitution, law and learning

learning were greatly affected, and the good which society reaped from both was defeated. Thus private property, instead of being protected, was invaded by law; and its outrages were borne about three hundred years before the people came to extremities. Popular fury at last succeeded, and, as always usual in such cases, knew no bounds. Their philosophers who had been the perverters of law and learning, were upon the point of banishment and destruction; but having a few men of probity and capacity of their number who were protected by the Monarch, the laws were again reduced to simple and intelligible rules, and every man of tolerable learning made a competent judge of his own case. These axioms were digested with so much knowledge and prudence, that they acquired the name of "Celestial judgements;" as tho' they had received the approbation of heaven, and consequently were unalterable. It is very certain that the English after the conquest, as well as the Danes before it, destroyed all the books and writings they could meet with, in order to make the Irish forget as soon as possible their old laws and customs, and to complete their subjection to the English yoke. But yet there are some remains of these books of laws; many of which were composed before, as well as after, the Christian æra. There were some in the possession of the late Duke of CHANDOS—part of WARE'S collections — and there are several in the private and public libraries in Ireland. But as they are written in a sort of language peculiar to the lawyers and Brehons of those times, long since disused, they are at present, as I am informed, and as it is natural to suppose, become utterly unintelligible both in the text and glossary. In the annals of the Four Masters, which is an authentick manuscript of great antiquity, many fragments are preserved of the

writings of their most eminent men, monarchs as well as others : and Bishop NICHOLSON informs us, that one CONRY had in his possession the decisions or reports of three and thirty of the ancient judges, the oldest whereof were given in the first century, and the latest in the tenth. To the question put by some here in England, by way of objection to these antiquities which still remain, " why none of them were ever published," I shall take this opportunity of giving an answer. The people of rank and fortune in Ireland are not only ignorant of the language and character in which these antiquities and histories are recorded, but they have always been brought up, through every succeeding generation, with our English prejudice, to look upon them with contempt ; or, what is still more absurd, to believe them to be the productions of later ages. What private person will therefore put himself to the expence of collecting, explaining, and publishing a set of manuscripts, the more unentertaining as they are the more authentic, which after all perhaps not an hundred people in the two kingdoms would purchase or peruse ?

When I said that we knew nothing of the laws of the ancient Irish, I did not mean to include their two great laws of inheritance, Tanistry and Gavelkind ; the former for the Lords of every sept or family, and the latter for common inferior lands and estates. The law of Tanistry, like ALEXANDER'S will, gave the inheritance to the strongest ; because it appears that seniority, if it was not accompanied with superior policy and experience, was very little or not at all regarded. In many cases therefore, if not in all, wherein the elder brother had not the greatest abilities and the best conduct, the younger was in fact the better gentleman ; for he succeeded to the chief command of his sept or family. This was a custom, though absurd and barbarous in itself, and

and attended very often with fatal consequences, which yet continued long after the conquest, even to the reign of JAMES the First. The rudeness, ignorance, and necessity of the times, undoubtedly gave rise to this law of Tanistry — and which PLUTARCH says was the law of the ancient Celtes — at the first establishment of the several colonies in the territories they got possession of; and there was some shadow of reason for it: because when every petty Prince had a power of peace or war, if a child or a woman should then possess a Chieftry or a Lordship, it would certainly be exposed to the rapine or incursions of its circumjacent neighbours. The same law extended to their Kings — as it hath been mentioned — choosing always the best soldier who had the greatest share of power; without regard to the succession of a family, provided he was of the royal Milesian race. From this law, or custom, some historians have deduced the original hospitality of the Irish nation; that by making a great appearance of splendour they might attract the admiration of the populace and encrease the number of their followers. But surely this is refining without occasion: for the Celtes or Scythians from whence they sprung were famous for this hospitality all over Europe; and it is mentioned in their history by every author.

The law of Gavelkind for the partition of inferior common estates, obtained not only amongst the ancient Irish, but also amongst the Britons and Gauls, and indeed throughout Europe, if not all the world; that the descendants might be enabled to acquire a livelihood, and settle in it without rapine and plunder, which was so much the general practice of the first inhabitants. Mr. SEEDEN derives this partition from the practice of NOAH, and others from the first plantation of the land of Canaan. It is certain it was the principal tenure of these islands,

as anciently as we have any traces of them. The original idea of this partition, from whencesoever derived, was doubtless common to the whole tribe before they separated and settled in different countries; but then every colony made such alterations and amendments in it as best suited their circumstances, or as their judgment and fancy prompted. Thus by this law in England, the next of kin only as sons or brothers, excluding bastards, were admitted; and for want of issue male, the daughters were allowed to inherit, and the widow to have her dower. This is the general nature of this tenure where it still remains; though there are some exceptions in particular places. In Ireland, wives and daughters were excluded, though there were no issue male; and not only bastards but the whole race or sept of males was admitted to share; in order, it is said, to preserve the name and family and to defend the country. Upon every death, the possessions of the whole family were to be put together, and again divided among the survivors by the head or *Causinny*, as he was called; which divested each of them of his estate upon every new division. This seems to be a part of the ancient usage of *Gavelkind* peculiar to the Irish, unless the "*Land-shifting*" in Germany, by which their tenure of partition is called, may resemble this in Ireland. The word "*Gavel*," is a *Gaulic* term for hold or tenure; and the best antiquarians imagine, "*Kind*" to be a *Saxon* addition, signifying nature, or genus, as in *Mankind*. It is evident that the custom of this partition was not derived from the word, because it would have had then the same title in every country; but a term was given to the usage according to the different language of each.

When King *JOHN* overthrew the *Brehon* laws in Ireland, and settled those of the English, this tenure

of partition received a great abatement, it is said, of its common force and usage. For it had been found by experience in this country, that military aids and settlements were greatly infringed and lessened by these fractions of estates, and that many genteel families were in a manner annihilated : “ and therefore it was ordained, that all Knights fees should come unto the eldest son by succession of heritage, whereby succeeding his ancestors in his whole inheritance, he might be better enabled to maintain the wars against the King’s enemies ; and that the Socage fee should be partible among the male children to enable them to encrease into many families for the better furtherance in, and encrease of, husbandry [b].” It is very evident from the account of all ancient writers, that these two laws of inheritance in Ireland, “ Tanistry and Gavelkind,” were the parents of many murders and civil wars ; and by making their possessions so precarious, shuffling and changing them upon every new partition, they were the principal cause of barbarism and desolation, and the want of all improvement. For who would plant and inclose, or improve their lands, which a stranger, whom perhaps he did not know tho’ related to him, should possess after his death, and sometimes before it ? Nor was this the only disadvantage. The inhabitants, though poor, yet being born to land, would never learn any trade, nor turn mechanicks, because it degraded them from their gentility : and the Cauffinny would refuse to admit a tradesman to his share of the estate, since he had, as it were, abdicated his family, by condescending to a way of life that was beneath a gentleman. The manuscript which I have, speaking of this law of Gavelkind, says the reason of it was, that each country not being able out of its own revenue to maintain an

army

[b]. Doddridge’s Treatise of Nobility, p. 119.

army that might defend itself, it was thus divided into small freeholds, that so each possessor might be obliged to follow the chief Lord to war for the defence of the country upon their own charge, which was the service by which they held it ; and the oftner a freehold was divided, the greater became the number of men in arms. To these laws of inheritance, the same manuscript adds another relating to murder, which I have not met with so described any where else. It says, that if any man committing murder was not immediately taken and executed in hot blood, it was customary for the Brehon to impose an eric or fine upon his nearest kindred ; which was part of it paid to the relations of the person murdered, and the other part to the chief Lord : and the reason of this was, because if any murderer could escape into another territory, he was protected ; and it not being lawful to draw the blood of his kindred for him, it was thought fit to impose a fine upon them, as a satisfaction to the Lord for the loss of his vassal, and to the friends of the party murdered ; that thereby the offenders might in some sort be punished in the persons, or at least the properties of their dearest kindred.

Several specimens of the Brehon laws are still to be seen, as I have said, in their public and private libraries ; from which, if they are intelligible, many of the ancient rites and customs of Ireland might be collected, which are now very obscure, if not altogether unknown. In the time of EDWARD the Third, it was enacted under the penalty of high treason, that none of the King's English subjects in this island should submit to a trial by the Brehon law : notwithstanding which, many of them were under a necessity of being concluded by the Irish laws and customs, till the whole country was settled upon an English bottom in the reign

reign of JAMES the First. Indeed the Common law of England was submitted and sworn to by all the Irish potentates who put themselves under the protection of King HENRY the Second ; and this is still as current and prevailing in the four courts at Dublin as at Westminster-Hall. A grant of the laws and customs of England was confirmed likewise by King JOHN, and his son HENRY the Third : but was confined to such of the natives as became liege subjects to our Kings, and such Englishmen as incorporated with them. Hence it came to pass, that, upon intermarriages between those that were without and within the English pale, frequent applications were made by the former, both men and women, for the benefit of these laws and the franchises belonging to them ; and there are great numbers of royal grants of naturalization upon such petitions, which I have seen, that were extracted from their ancient records. In short, the Common law, except so much of it as hath been altered by Statute, is the same at this day in both kingdoms : and most of the public acts which by experience have been found beneficial to the whole people of England, have soon after been admitted and passed the Parliament of that kingdom. But though this is the case at present, yet it is to be observed that 'till the time of JAMES the First, the law of England, as SPENSER says, " was never properly applied unto the Irish nation as by a purposed plot of government." Indeed in the reign of HENRY the Eighth, who first assumed the title of King of Ireland, all the Irish lords and principal men came in and acknowledged him for their sovereign ; but being immediately left to themselves, and their own licentious manners, they soon forgot their obedience, and relapsed into all their former anarchy and confusion.

Whether there really were, or not, any gold mines in Ireland, as some historians, I have said, relate, yet it is not to be denied, that the use of money was very early there; even long before the arrival of the Norwegians or Danes, who are said by the English writers to have introduced it. The Irish word "monadh," as well as the other appellative words used with little variation in most of the ancient and modern languages to signify money, seem to have been derived from one and the same origine, the Hebrew "Monah or Mineh;" the name both of a weight and of a kind of money. Besides this, there are found in the Irish language many mercantile and other words derived from the Hebrew, which not only shew the great antiquity of that island — as it hath been already proved — but which denote also the early use of trade and of money in Ireland; into which it is probable it was introduced as soon as it was frequented by the Phénicians and other trading nations, if not as soon as it was inhabited. A mint however is said to have been erected and silver money coined, about five hundred years after the arrival of the Milesian colony: and if silver was then coined, it may be presumed, I think very reasonably, that other money of copper or iron were in use before. There are many instances of their payments being made in gold and silver by the ounce in times later than this; but then these were generally of large sums, or for the utensils or ornaments of churches: and yet, according to KEATING, at the time when Christianity was first promulged in Ireland, mints were erected at Ardmagh and Cashell, and money coined for the service of the state. But from the difference in the respective weight of each of the pieces of coin that are now in being, and were current in those times, it might be necessary to pay and receive money in any considerable sum by the scale; which

Coin

SIMON.

WARE.

NICHOL-

SON.

O FLA-

HER.

BERKLY.

Anonym.

which may be the reason why the old historians so often mention the payment of gold and silver by the ounce. But as all the coins of those antient times which are now remaining in the cabinets of the curious, are only of a penny value; another reason occurs why payments should be made by weight and not by tale, which is that of dispatch and saving trouble.

Whether the monarchs of Ireland only, or each petty King in his province or territory, assumed the power of coining money does not appear, but the latter seems most probable: And whatever their coins were, there is no doubt but they were extremely rude and illegible, coarse in their make, and inelegant in their inscription; as appears from some which are still preserved. Though the Danes did not introduce money into this island, yet they greatly improved the coin of it: And it was as late as in the reign of King JOHN, that sterling money was brought into both kingdoms, which took its name from those Easterlings whom he called from Germany to assist in refining his coin. Other writers say, that the word was in use long before his time, and that it was introduced into England an hundred and fifty years before the Norman conquest. But be this as it may, King JOHN was the first monarch who ordered money to be coined in Ireland of the same weight and fineness with that in England; and this might be the foundation of the report above. This is not a place in which to give an history of the Irish coins; which any one who has a curiosity that way may see accurately drawn out in Mr. SIMON'S'S Essay on that subject. It is only necessary to say here, that the last regulation of the coin in Ireland, was in the year seventeen hundred and thirty-seven; at which time the English guinea and half-guinea, the moidore and other Portugal pieces, the Spanish and French

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pistoles and the Louis d'ors, were made current in that kingdom at particular rates. But this scheme, though intended for the public good, was not well adapted, it hath been said, to the circumstances of Ireland; and the mischief of melting silver into plate, or sending it out of the island, is there grown to such a height, as well as here, that their only silver coin is much in the same state with ours; scarcely any thing but adulterated or old worn English shillings — which pass for thirteen-pence — and some sixpenny pieces of a proportionable value not worth much above a groat. Upon the whole it seems necessary, that a mint should be allowed to Ireland; and the several species of copper, silver, and gold coins, made of such a standard weight and value, compared with the English, as are proper and convenient. It appears from the Essay abovementioned and from some historians, that from the year eight hundred and seventy-two, down to EDWARD the Sixth in fifteen hundred and fifty, if not to QUEEN ELIZABETH, there were mints in Ireland and money coined for the public service. But I saw in the council books, an order to the Duke of ORMOND from CHARLES the second, in sixteen hundred and sixty-two, to erect a mint at Dublin; or in any other proper place, with very ample instructions in every particular relating to it. But I believe, upon a representation of the great expences of such an establishment from the Lord Lieutenant and council, which I saw likewise, that design was laid aside. However it was not deemed contrary to the interest of England to allow the people of Ireland the benefit of a mint which related only to themselves. Indeed it seems plainly to be the interest of England, that the Irish should have a liberty of coining their own money, that they may not be under the necessity, which, they are at present, of carrying over the English coin, notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the severe laws which are made here to prohibit it. The want of coin is an apparent disadvantage in their commerce; and a new coinage would regulate all the wild discord of their foreign coins, and blend them into an orderly proportioned mass for the service of the publick: But as the charge of coining is in England about two and a half per cent: besides the annual expence of house rent, and salaries for the officers and servants of the mint, it is possible that this might not quit the cost; especially if it is considered, that further than the state thought fit to supply bullion to be coined, the mint would stand still, and the rent and salaries be a dead charge to the nation. It seems therefore to be the cheapest, as well as the wisest method of remedying this evil of the want of coin, that we should grant them the liberty of having an hundred thousand pounds, or more, coined at the mint in England, in ten-penny, or twelve-penny pieces Irish; which would save them all the expences of rent and salaries, and be the surest method of making their coin of the proper standard. Indeed if they were allowed only to coin pieces of six-pence and three-pence value, it seems probable that they would find their account in it, by keeping them at least at home for the use of their artisans and manufacturers; and especially if without diminishing the pure silver in this coin, they were permitted to encrease the allay, and the size, and hardness; as the Dutch, and the Danes, and others do; because at present by constant use, they wear so fast, and so thin, and are so small, that, besides their want of value, in time they become in danger of being blown away with the wind.

If the law of Gavelkind encreased their Customs. septes and names into such numbers as are not to be found in any other kingdom in Europe, and thereby created great parties and factions in times of trouble WARE. DAVIES. SPENSER

INTRODUCTION.

and dissension, adhering to one another with great constancy, there were also two customs peculiar to the Irish, which were the cause of such strong and violent combinations as were prejudicial to the good government and ordering of the state. The one of these was Fostering, and the other Gossipred; and both of them in higher estimation with the natives of Ireland before the conquest, than with any other people in Christendom. By the first of these customs, the children were always put away to fosterers; "the potent and rich men, says Sir JOHN DAVIES [i,] selling and the meaner sort buying the alterage of their children: and the reason was, that because in the opinion of this people, Fostering hath always been a stronger alliance than blood; and the Foster-children love, and are beloved of their Foster-fathers and their sept, more than of their own natural parents and their kindred." The other custom was that of Gossipred; which though it is a sort of spiritual affinity by the canon law, and a juror that was a gossip to either of the parties might anciently have been challenged as not indifferent by our law, yet there never was any nation that ever made so religious and strict account of it as the Irish. Both this and the former custom obtained in other countries, as far as putting children out to nurse, and being sureties for them in baptism; but they created no parties nor factions as they did in Ireland, whereby the great were enabled to oppress their inferiors and oppose their equals, and the lower people were countenanced or tolerated in their licentiousness.

If these customs were productive of a great deal of mischief to the state, there were others which were inconvenient and full of oppression to the meaner sort of people. Bonaught was a tax imposed at the will of the Lord, for the maintenance of

[x] Histor. relations, &c. p. 180.

of horsemen and light armed foot ; and besides this, there was another tax laid four times a year on freeholders for the entertainment and wages of such foldiers ; upon which customs, were engrafted by the English a most wicked extortion, called Coigne and Livery, for such purposes. Coshery was a custom amongst the Irish chiefs or septs, of exacting entertainment for themselves and their retinue, their dogs and horses, from their tenants and those that were under their jurisdiction ; which was almost as grievous a burden as the other, and in which they literally eat them out of house and home. There were other customs of this kind, by which the Lords or little Kings were absolute tyrants, and the tenants not much better than slaves. As late however as since their conversion to Christianity, they had slaves which they bought and sold at a certain price ; as it appears from some canons of ancient Irish synods, in which the legacy of a Bishop out of the goods of the church is determined by the price of a maid. Among those servants were reckoned such as were taken in war, who were bought and sold at a certain price, and were often so redeemed. Besides these servants, they had others whom they called villains, whose lands were granted to them as part of the inheritance or farm of the Lord or Chief. These were not permitted to bear any military employment ; but after the manner of the old heroic ages, followed only the rustic labours of digging, hedging, plowing, and such kind of drudgery. The reader is not to imagine, that the name carried with it any such odium or reproach in those ancient times, as it hath done in later ages. We had the same name and the same sort of servants in England ; and the one meant no more than villagers to the Lord, and the other only the duties and customs of the village for the Lord's use.

It is probable that the first and most ancient manner of burying their dead was that of burning ; as we may learn from an old canon after their conversion to Christianity : in which it is said “ that Kings only were buried in churches, and that all other men were buried ether in the fire, or under an heap of stones ; that no stranger shall have liberty of cutting the church—meaning making a grave in it—without the leave of the Prince ; and whosoever shall attempt to do so, shall give satisfaction according to the dignity of the place.” Besides the custom of burning, we may conclude from this canon, as well as from other circumstances of their antiquities already mentioned, another custom in burying their dead, which was under an heap of stones. There are many remains of this custom in several parts of the island ; and we know it was an ancient practise in many other countries, for men that had been signal, either for eminent virtues, or notorious villanies. An instance of the latter kind we find as early as amongst the children of Israel, when they buried ACHAN ; of whom it is said, that they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day.” Many bones and urns have been discovered under these heaps in several parts of Ireland ; and it is not improbable, that the custom may have been derived from the Jews, who were commanded to put to death their vilest malefactors, by stoning, or heaping stones upon them. Whence-soever it was derived, the custom is to this day still retained among the common native Irish. For as they carry a corpse to the grave, they set it down in a convenient place, and all the people who accompany it bring stones and raise an heap over it after it is interred. It was usual for the women to howl and clap their hands at the funeral of their friends ; and sometimes they were hired to this office when it was not thought there were enough without. The
Scythians

Scythians from whom they sprung, and even the Romans and Germans had the same sort of custom : and the expression of TACITUS on this subject is, " that in women it is commendable to lament, in men to remember."

After the view that we have taken of the religion, laws, and government of the Irish, we may naturally conclude, if we were not so informed, that the way of life of the first inhabitants 'till the Christian æra, was not much unlike that of the Patriarchs and the ancient Celtæ, simple, temperate, unpolished and unconfined ; especially as they had no other riches than cattle, and little or no traffick with any other nation. " In the infancy of states", says Dr. BLACKWELL [k], men generally resemble the public constitution. They have only that turn which the rough culture of accidents, perhaps dismal enough, through which they have passed, could give them. They are ignorant and undesigning, governed by fear and superstition its companion. There is a vast void in their minds : they know not what will happen, nor according to what tenour things will take their course. Every new object finds them unprepared, and they gaze and stare like infants taking in their first ideas of light." This account is according to nature ; and in all probability bids fairer for a true description of the Irish, 'till commerce had polished and improved them, than what the ancient authors, such as STRABO and SOLINUS, say of them on the one hand, or the Irish historians and poets on the other. It is incredible to believe with the former, that they fed upon human flesh, that they eat up the dead bodies of their parents as a thing that was honourable, that they had no sense of virtue or religion, and that they knew no distinction between right and wrong : neither is it

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[k] Life of Homer, p. 42.

it much more easy to believe what the latter tell us, that they had a great superiority over their neighbour nations, that the social and moral duties were carried to all the lengths which heathen lights could afford, and that they had palaces and magnificent structures, equal to, if not surpassing in grandeur and expence, the most costly and splendid fabricks of the neighbouring nations. For notwithstanding this flourish of Dr. KEATING, who pretends so much to truth and impartiality, there is not a more certain fact in their whole history, than that they had no palaces nor structures of any other grandeur and expence, during the first age of the Irish, nor 'till the latter end of the middle age, than of wattles plaistered over on the sides, and covered on the top with turf or rushes. Perhaps in a country where woods were then so abounding as to be inconvenient, some few houses might be built of solid timber. But the other materials were near at hand, were least expensive, and most easily thrown up: and of these, it is probable, that their houses in general were constructed; and were only great or small according to the wealth or dignity of the inhabitants.

As they had little or no trade, so they had no corporate towns: and their villages were only a confused parcel of these huts placed at a little distance from each other, without any order or regularity, and generally in the middle of a wood; the avenues of which were defended with slight ramparts of earth, or trees felled and laid across one another. The palaces of their Kings and Princes were all made in the same simple manner, merely to answer the necessities and not the grandeur nor luxury of life: and so far did inveterate custom prevail among these people, that even after the reception of Christianity and the refinement of commerce, they could not for a long time persuade themselves

to build their churches and monasteries of more solid and magnificent materials than their own houses. Thus it was not till the beginning of the ninth century, according to the best historians of their own, that the Irish had any structures built with stone and lime : and these were only a sort of round towers erected by the Danes or Easterlings, in order to watch the motions of the armies of the natives : and after the Irish had driven the Danes out of the island, these towers, according to some writers, were turned into bell-fries, and, according to others, into places of retirement for penitents or anachorets. It is possible that some of them might be used for one purpose and some of them for another : but they were originally built as I have said ; and it was not 'till long after these, that churches and castles were built with stone. Had these towers been erected by the Irish themselves and for a religious purpose, as several of their antiquarians contend, it is highly probable that they would have had other buildings of the same materials for their monasteries and churches especially : and yet it is confesse'd by most, that the first chapel of stone in this island, was built at Bangor by O MORGHIR Archbishop of Ardmagh, who died in eleven hundred and forty eight. Mr. HARRIS, in his additions to WARE, who insists on the round towers being built by the Irish for religious uses, has explained away this expression of St. BERNARD relating to the chapel at Bangor, to mean only that it was the first church of lime and stone that had been seen in those uncivilized parts of Ireland ; and he has done it with some appearance of success. The palace of Eamania mentioned before as the place of one of their national councils, we are told, was the only instance they had of architectonical magnificence among the ancient Irish, and was built three hundred and fifty-four years before the Christian æra. It was destroyed it seems, in the year of our redemption three hundred

dred and thirty-two, affording through so many ages such examples of splendour, greatness and regular œconomy, as do the greatest honour to the whole Milesian race. In order that the reader may not be misled, it may be proper perhaps to remind him, that all this may be true, as far as splendour, greatness, and œconomy can be attained, by timber, wattles, plaister, turf, and rushes, put together in a rude unskilful manner, and nothing further. For they had no other materials; and notwithstanding the architectonical magnificence abovementioned, it is certain that their skill, and their tools used in architecture, were mean and imperfect in the age wherein it was built.

In a country where the people had but few mechanical arts, where they lived on the produce of their own soil, and where coin and metals were not made equivalents for necessaries, each clan must sit down in its own hereditary canton, with a certain portion of land for pasturage and culture. In every such district each lived apart; not near enough to encroach or incommode, and not too far separated to be able to assist and assemble on any emergency. As they had no other than inland commerce during the greatest part of the first age, they held great markets or fairs in which they bartered their commodities with one another, and carried on several other affairs relating to domestic policy. They used little boats on their lakes or rivers like the Indian canoes, made of large trees hollowed but their ships and larger vessels, in which they sailed upon the ocean with oars without the help of sails, were called Curraghs, made of wicker-work, and covered with the hides of beasts. These were the first ships and vessels used in the world: and as the Irish were for some time more secluded by their situation than any other people from commerce and intercourse with the rest of Europe, so these might probably

bably continue longer in use amongst the people of that island than any where else.

Their whole wealth consisted in agriculture and herds of cattle; so that as they had nothing to export, they had also all the necessaries of life within themselves, and had therefore no occasion for traffick with other nations. In process of time indeed, as industry and experience made the produce of their land too great for home consumption; this put them upon exchanging their superfluities with other nations; and their commerce flourished, it must be owned, above that of Britain. Whether it is owing to the greater sloth of the present inhabitants, or to the depopulation of the country by so many wars and massacres, it may be hard to say; but many remains and traces of agriculture are now to be seen, in some of the most waste and uncultivated parts of the kingdom. So that the same country, whose chief commodity was furnishing other nations with corn, is now very often obliged to fetch their bread from foreign countries.—A strange and lamentable revolution, it must be acknowledged! The same soil and climate, but not the same labour and industry are to be found: and yet modern Ireland, by the improvements in navigation, hath numberless means of wealth and greatness which its ancient inhabitants had not. But as one of their best writers says, “they are doomed to be singular in extremes; to be a great and learned people under the smallest advantages, and a miserable nation amid the greatest.”

The several colonies of the first age lived there, it may be supposed, in the same manner as their parent nation of the Celtes lived in Gaul and Britain and Spain. They fed on the spontaneous productions of the earth, on the milk of their kine, and on what they could acquire by their skill in hunting, shooting with darts, and fishing. These last exercises,

so necessary for their support, became consequently their chief employment; and such employment rendered them fierce, hardy, and impatient under restraint; to which their not living in towns or large villages did not a little contribute. The flesh of such animals as they could take administered to their food, and their skins contributed to their cloathing. At their ordinary entertainments they sat in a ring on rushes or straw; and in the middle was placed a table, whereon was set the bread which had been baked on a gridiron or before the fire, milk meats, flesh and fish both boiled and broiled; and in the mean time the cup went about very briskly. Their chief drink was beer made of barley as in these modern times, and a liquor, which we call mead, made of honey and water. The time of their feasting was usually in the evening, at which their bards always assisted; when they celebrated the praises of their heroes in verses and sonnets which they sung to their harps. The whole body of the people throughout every rank, were extremely fond of musick and poetry; and the arms of the kingdom were probably for that reason an harp. The harp and the bag-pipe were in use at their funerals also as well as at their feasts, in order to encrease the noise, and to encourage the women to cry after the Scythian manner; and those who could play well on those instruments were held in great esteem.

The military genius, from the nature of their government, and from their domestic warfare which lasted above a thousand years, it is natural to imagine, must hold one of the highest ranks in the state. Thus their Princes especially, were inured to fatigue and martial discipline from their infancy as much as any of their subjects, and made military stratagems a great part of their study. The Kings gave the order of knighthood to their sons at seven years

years of age with the following ceremony : At the time of the creation, the boys being armed with light and slender spears in proportion to their strength, run several courses against a shield that was set up and fastened in the midst of a plain for that purpose ; and he that broke most spears had the principal honour of the day. The Irish, like their progenitors, never made use of fortified towns for their defence, thinking them a check upon heroic bravery and a sort of coat of mail for cowards. They placed their defence as well as confidence in a martial fury, and in a dread of slavery more than of death itself. They began their onsets with the utmost enthusiasm, and yet they rallied with coolness and dexterity. Their Kings were so jealous of their glory, and this glory was so much envied, that from the beginning to the end of the history, there is scarce an instance to be found of any monarch's surviving the loss of his crown ; which he always wore on the day of battle. They were often attacked by faction 'till they crushed their opponents by the weight of power ; or, which much oftener happened, 'till their opponents subdued them by the force of arms. Their horsemen, who rode at first without saddles and afterwards without stirrups, were armed with arrows and javelins, and some with coats of armour. They had servants on foot who had only darts and who took care of their horses. Their military chariots were in great use, before the cavalry were introduced, to break the enemies ranks and to throw them into confusion ; at which they were so expert, that many great feats are recorded of their ancient martial charioteers. In the middle age they had two sorts of infantry, some called Galloglasses armed with an helmet, a coat of mail, and a long sword ; and in the right hand they carried a pole-ax with which they often did terrible execution. The light armed
foot

foot were furnished with darts and daggers or two edged javelins, in the use of which they were very valorous and expert. Military musick was much studied and delighted in by this warlike people, as it fired them with courage, enthusiasm, and contempt of danger; and by the help of this alone they sounded the charge, rallied, or retreated. In courage, other nations were no doubt their equals, in art and discipline probably their superiors; but they exceeded all other troops in Europe in sustaining the severest fatigues of war. They were so greedy of conquest and of plunder, as well as so tenacious of what they had gained, that they fought with a strength and fury that nothing scarcely could withstand, but like fire and storm they drove all before them. Their constant ordinary militia in times of peace, about the Christian æra, consisted of three divisions of equal number, in all nine thousand men, under successive commanders of the greatest name for valour and experience in the art of war. These were kept in constant pay by the Monarch, Princes, and People, in order to guard the coasts from foreign enemies, and to keep all quiet at home. But in case of any emergency, either in order to suppress a rebellion, or to withstand an invasion from abroad, a power was given to the general to encrease his standing army to seven battalions, making in the whole one and twenty thousand. The famous FINN — so much celebrated of late in the pretended poems of OSSIAN, under the name of FINGAL — was the commander in chief of this illustrious body; and many volumes are written of the great exploits of him and his heroes. The Irish forces in the pay of France, which are the flower of their army, to say nothing of any others, have in all their wars for these threescore years past, approved themselves the descendants of these valiant and warlike people.

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Both the males and females of the ancient Irish, were generally tall, well made, and of a strong and hardy constitution ; very patient of cold and hunger, extremely frank and amorous, revengeful, proud, and slothful. They were very loose in the article of marriage, retaining concubines, and repudiating their wives at pleasure, living with them in common, and in short laying little or no restraint on their inclinations. The reader will observe, that I am speaking of their pristine state, and not after Ireland was become the seat of commerce and literature to the Western world : and then I shall escape the censures, which KEATING hath either ignorantly or malevolently thrown upon CAMDEN, and some others, who speak of them in such terms as I have done. The dress of the old inhabitants was simple as their manners ; the produce and manufacture of their own country. The Men wore a mantle and trowsers ; the Women a mantle and petticoat : Both had brogues upon their feet, being something thicker than pumps sewed with leather ; the Men had a cappeen and the Women a kircher upon their heads, throwing their mantles over them when they went out to keep off the sun or rain. The linen cloth was anciently so extensive a manufacture in this country, that MORYSON says, [V] the native Irish gentry used to wear thirty or forty ells in a shirt, all gathered and wrinkled, and coloured with saffron, because they never put them off 'till they were worn out. The great were apparelled anciently much in the same manner with the lower rank ; allowing for the fineness of the texture, and the variety or rather the number of their colours. Indeed it was the number of them in any garment which properly distinguished the rank of the wearer ; and those entitled to six, came either next in magistracy or next in honour to the

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[V] Morison's history part iii. p. 180.

supreme monarch. This law did more, it is said, towards gaining esteem and respect than all the golden trappings of the East, and yet cost nothing. Besides it produced a noble emulation among men of letters ; who, on proving themselves thoroughly skilled in the learning and philosophy of the country, received the vesture allotted for the provincial sovereigns, and consequently were next to them in honour. The education of their youth was begun in their early infancy, by taking them from habits of idleness and training them up to laborious exercises of body, at the same time that their minds were not left uncultivated. The pleasures of the chase superseded at stated times all other diversions, and no people in the world pursued them with greater eagerness. In this exercise they underwent inexpressible fatigues ; which contributed greatly to their muscular strength, and gave them agility and firmness against the severity of the weather. In short the chase was such a school for teaching them vigilance, a skill in archery, patience under labour, and long abstinence from food, that few foreign enemies could stand before them, and none could ever equal them in rapid marches and quick retreats. It was by these means that they often baffled all the forces of Britain and the Roman legions united, when they came hither to the assistance of their friends the Picts — These are the outlines of the manners of the ancient Irish : let us now turn to those of the present.

According to Sir William PERRY, “ they may be deduced from their original constitutions of body, from the air, from their ordinary food, from their state and condition, from the influence of their teachers, and lastly from their ancient customs which affect as well their consciences as their nature.” In their stature, shape, and complexion, they have not degenerated from their ancestors, and are nothing

thing inferior to any other people. In their courage and intrepidity, it is well known that they do not disgrace their origin ; nor is it in this particular only that they imitate their progenitors. For, above three parts in four of the mere Irish live in little huts or cabins, without chimnies, doors, or windows. Their principal diet is potatoes, and milk sweet and sour, thick and thin, which in summer time is also their drink : in winter they drink water, and whiskey---like our gin---when they can get it. But tobacco taken in short pipes, together with snuff, seems to be the great pleasure of their lives ; inasmuch that the chief part of their expence is to procure them. Notwithstanding the great plenty of flesh, they seldom eat any, unless it be of the smaller animals ; and they are yet so far from being civilized, especially in villages distant from cities, and where the English manners have not prevailed, that their habitations, furniture, and apparel are as sordid as those of the savages in America.

Whether the laziness which is attributed to them ---and very justly---is more derived from their ancestors, or their original constitution, it is hard to say : but it is certain that there is still among the native Irish, a very strong and remarkable antipathy to all labour ; and that most of them possess a cynical content in dirt and beggary, to a degree beyond any other people in christendom. The cabin of an Irish peasant is the cave of poverty : within you see a pot and a little straw, and without an heap of children almost naked tumbling on the dunghill. Their fields and gardens are a lively counterpart of SOLOMON'S description of the field of the slothful, and of the vineyard of the man void of understanding. In every road the ragged ensigns of poverty are displayed : the traveller often meets caravans of these miserable wretches, whole families in a drove without clothes to cover, or bread to feed them ;

both which might be procured with moderate labour. But the work of one man in the field will sustain a family of forty with potatoes ; and they build a hut or cabin in three days. The milk of one cow will afford food and drink enough for three men in the summer ; and they can get cockles, oysters, muscles, and crabs almost every where near the sea in great abundance. What need they therefore to labour hard, who can content themselves with this wretchedness ? Besides they have been taught, and they teach it one another, that this way of living is more like the patriarchs their ancestors of old, and their saints of later times, by whose prayers and merits they are to be relieved, and whose examples they are to follow. The reader must not take this as a description of the inhabitants of Ireland, but of the lowest sort of the mere native Irish ; nor of them universally, but in the parts most uncultivated by people of fortune. As to the thievry with which they are charged, and which they inherit likewise from their ancestors, this is common to all thin peopled countries, such as Ireland is ; where there are not many eyes to detect it, where what is stolen is easily hid or eaten, and where it is not difficult to burn the house, or to violate the persons of those who prosecute such crimes. But if such are the manners of the lowest sort, yet the Irish gentry, who approve themselves to be the remains of a free and learned nation, in their diet, houses, and apparel, resemble or rather exceed the English. Their hospitality is more extensive and general, their behaviour is polite, and their table elegant. Let this suffice for a description of the native Irish.

In the following characteristicks, I speak of the inhabitants of Ireland ; and not as distinguished by this or that name and origine. Though no country in Europe is capable of more improvement than Ireland, yet it is as much behind other nations
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in arts and industry, as it is before them in the advantages of harbours, soil, and climate. Nor are natural advantages the only ones which they possess beyond their neighbours : they have many civil ones. It is the peculiar privilege of the Irish, to enjoy the fullest leisure for cultivating the arts of peace, and for studying the public welfare. They are neither embroiled with foreign wars, nor distressed nor perplexed with foreign affairs ; and yet by their relation to England they in some sort reap the benefit of our wars and treaties. In short, with the expence of keeping up a standing force of twelve thousand men—increased at this time to sixteen thousand— they are protected by the fleets and armies of Great Britain, whose interest it is to guard and defend them on every side. They pay no taxes of any kind for the support of government, except quit and crown rents, and two shillings a year for every hearth : so that whatever estates they have there, they have them all to themselves ; without any deduction for a tax upon their lands, which is so heavy a burden to the freeholders of England. The custom and excise duties which are very small and few compared with ours, are appropriated to particular purposes of national utility.

But amidst all these advantages, “ in such a climate and such a soil, under such a mild and equitable government, and with so many navigable rivers for domestic trade, to behold so many roads untrodden, so many fields untilled, so many houses desolate, and so many hands unemployed, this, said the late Bishop BERKLEY, is a new spectacle under the sun.” A spirit of improvement, it must be owned, however, hath of late years gone out amongst them, as may be seen in many parts of this Introduction ; but there is yet a great deal left to do. The wise and good laws relating to the linen manufacture, the care and activity of that board,

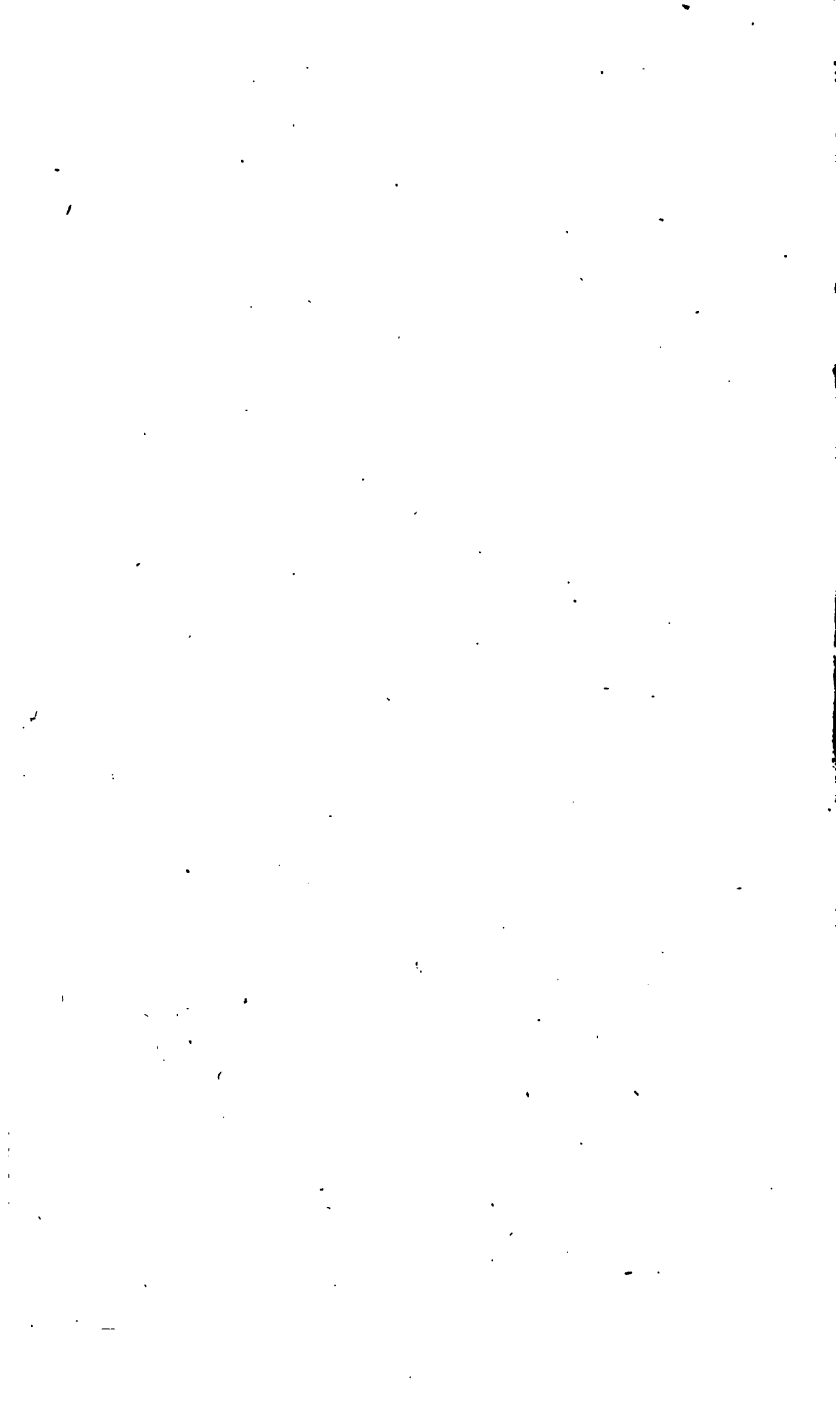
and the many noble designs of the Dublin society, have in some measure introduced industry, and a cultivation of the sciences into that kingdom. But yet the gentry of Ireland, either not understanding, or not having a proper taste and notion of magnificence, affect wretched distinctions which impoverish themselves without enriching the public. It is questioned whether there is any country in Europe so good a customer for claret as Ireland, which they pay our enemies for with ready money ; and the ladies send out a greater proportion of their wealth for fine apparel than any other females in the whole world. But yet no people in Europe are so meanly provided with houses and furniture suitable to their estates, as the people of fortune in Ireland.

One would think that noble houses well built and furnished, a great train of servants, a fine equipage, and an elegant plentiful table, are distinctions glittering and splendid enough to feed the vanity of any mortal : And these by procuring the magnificence of the rich, would also provide for the necessities of the poor. A grand mansion house highly finished and furnished, extensive gardens beautifully disposed, and decorated with water, wood, and statues---for all which the materials are to be found in Ireland in great plenty---would be an improvement that would remain at home, pass on to the next heir, and adorn and enrich the country. This would be a taste for magnificence which would excite emulation, promote a spirit of industry, and employ many hands that are now idle, and consequently miserable and licentious. But this is a taste, which the gentry of Ireland have in general been very defective in : and it is left to the present age, to adorn their country with sumptuous edifices, sculpture, and painting, and many other distinctions which they may procure without a foreign trade.--

I must

I must again caution the reader against understanding this representation in too strict a sense. For there are many noble houses, and some public edifices erected of late years, which would do honour to any nation. But in describing a people, an historian is obliged to speak as they generally are ; and in that sense it is still too true, notwithstanding these exceptions, that the men of fortune in Ireland are very deficient in the articles abovementioned. I persuade myself however that they will not long remain so.

Having now presented the reader with the best accounts that I could meet with of the several particulars which are necessary for his understanding the following history, it is time to put an end to this Introduction, and to proceed to the work itself.



THE
HISTORY
OF
IRELAND.

BOOK I.

IT cannot be a matter of surprize to any one, who has considered the vanity which every nation hath fallen into of deriving themselves from a more ancient origine than can be proved, that the natives of Ireland should have recourse to fable and invention to magnify their antiquity. It is a circumstance also common to every country in the world in the first and ruder ages, that through a great series of time tradition held the place of history ; and as little matter of moment was transacted in their first settlements, so there was little matter to be recorded. Tradition however must necessarily be defective in the two important circumstances of time and place,

place, for very obvious reasons. The facts were recited in the times wherein they happened, when it was unnecessary to recite the dates or places; and when they afterwards came to be enquired into, from not being handed down they never could be recovered.

It is not therefore peculiar to the country of which I am now going to write, that its earliest ages are buried in obscurity, or involved in fable and tradition. The nature of man and the constant course of affairs in this earthly system, preclude us from receiving any materials for history which may be called authentic, of the first age of any nation; and in fact there are none in profane history to be found. It is a circumstance lamented by every sensible historian that ever wrote; and should consequently teach every reader to lay but little stress on the originals which are recorded of any people. Curiosity may prompt us to see what is said of the earliest ages that we can trace; but the author will mispend his abilities, and the reader will waste his time, who shall study those relations, and depend upon them for history: and yet amidst all the fabulous or traditionary accounts which are given of nations, it is possible to extract something which bears a near resemblance to truth, if it is not the whole, or nothing but the truth. A great deal of ore indeed is to be dug out of the rubbish of ancient authors to come at this small quantity of gold; and it must be sifted with patience and industry as well as art. But this which is the most difficult and unpleasant task to the writer, affords the reader less knowledge and entertainment than any other.

Though I have made these concessions, conformably to the sentiments of Lord BOLINGBROKE, in favour of the uncertainty of ancient history on the one hand, yet on the other hand it seems to me, that

that the criticks have been much severer in their censures of the old historians of these northern nations than they ought to have been; and there are every day almost things brought to light, by comparing the history of one country with another, which strengthen, if they do not absolutely confirm, the accounts which have been generally given by these historians.

If some people have been too credulous in believing all the traditions of their country which have been handed down, it is as certain that others have treated them with too much levity; giving them all up as fables and forgeries to impose upon posterity. Such a design appears ridiculous as well as wicked; and it has happened in fact, that we have had stronger historical proofs of the reality of many of these accounts, once treated as fabulous, than we have of several others of a thousand years later date. "In these kind of criticisms men often betray their own ignorance or prejudice, by expecting plainer proofs from these old writers, than the remote age in which they lived has rendered possible. Thus though correct histories could not be written, before letters and writing were invented, yet the keeping an account of the number of their Kings and the length of their reigns, was as easy as the Muscovite computation, by stringing beads upon a wire. It is a great mistake to imagine, that time, which devours brass or marble, annihilates truth; because things that are once true, are true for ever; nay further it must be allowed, that lies and fables added to them, neither make them less true, nor less useful to those who have judgment enough to discern the difference; if it did, we must throw away the modern history as well as the ancient. Many learned writers, with the helps that we have gained from historical libraries, since the invention of printing and other improvements, have made discoveries

coveries of ancient times, as wonderful as the late astronomers with their telescopes have made in the stars and planets. But these discoveries have been gradual and improving, instead of growing less by time [*m.*"]

HUTCH-
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Dissertat.
KEAT-
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The Bards, as I have said in the Introduction, were the only historians which the first inhabitants of Ireland, and indeed all their progenitors the Gauls, had in every country. Nothing was committed to writing in those ages, except the arcana of the Druids; but all public transactions being turned into verse were sung at their public feasts, and when they went to war, accompanied with their harps. The necessary ornaments of poetry give a great scope to a poetic genius to enlarge, illustrate, and invent; and what the first bards might relate with great adherence to truth, as it was not committed to writing, their successors might embellish with metaphor and fiction; 'till at last the truth might be so overrun with fable, as to make it difficult to distinguish them. As disagreeable a circumstance as this may be in investigating the Irish history, it is one of the most natural signs of its antiquity. We ought not therefore to enter into a peevish disquisition of the truth of circumstances, which poetry will never bear, and is against its laws: it is enough, if the gross of the history and its chief characters are true. It is however as certain, as any fact can be at so great a distance of time, that there is a good foundation for the ancient history of Ireland, in the sonnets and ballads of their bards or poets; if we confine it, as we ought to do, to the memory of the first founders and more famous heroes of a nation, with some draughts of genealogies for Princes or great men, without

[*m*] Bp. Hutchinson's Defence of ancient Historians, passim.

without adopting the fables and forgeries intermixed with them.

Thus we are told by O FLAHERTY, the best chronologer of the Irish, " that till the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine, during a period of above a thousand years, the poets had the sole power of delivering laws to the people, and that they pronounced their judgments in verse ; laws not being yet committed to writing [n.]] But if an equal indulgence is given to the first poetical records of these bards, which is given to the traditions of other ancient nations, the use of letters and arts can be proved near as early in Ireland as in any other European country. Here the great security of the nation from foreign invasions would retain them ; and a popular form of government for many ages might no doubt improve them. Those circumstances must naturally give rise to history in a very early period ; and the fragments that are left of it afford not only many domestic facts, but several instructive lights also regarding these ancient people. Many extracts from these records, which have been collected, translated, and printed by the natives, reach up very near the beginning of its existence, and tell their several colonies in order, the names of their leaders, and the public accidents which happened in their time.

These particular details indeed are brought as an objection to the credit of the Irish history by Mr. INNES, in his Critical Essay on the ancient inhabitants of North Britain ; some of which details no doubt are false and fabulous. But if we consider the manner of writing in those very early times, as mentioned above, this is not sufficient to discredit, or set aside, all the history in which they are found. In these extracts it is remarkable that the characters of the heroes, though of the same kind, and
excelling

excelling in one and the same thing—princely courage or bravery—yet are all diversified, and marked with some peculiarities that distinguish them. This could scarcely ever have been feigned; it was truth and nature alone that could form those differences, so real and yet so nice, and afterwards offer them to a representation: “To describe so many Men, to point out their manners, to paint their persons, to relate their adventures, and make a long recital of their families, seems to be beyond the power of fiction. The making or feigning faculty, be it ever so rich and inventive, after an effort or two recoils upon itself; and if it finds no store of originals within, either falls a repeating the same characters with a tedious uniformity, or contrives false ones that glare and make a show, but by some wry feature certainly betray their unlikeness to truth [o.]” Let these observations be well considered by those who deny the authenticity of all ancient history, and let it be applied particularly to that of Ireland, and they will afford a collateral evidence of its antiquity.

Dissertat.
NICHOL-
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KEAT-
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But as a more convincing proof than speculative refinements, that these poetical records are not entirely fable void of truth, it must be observed that they have been authenticated in some degree by Sir ISAAC NEWTON's account of early foreign nations; which corresponds in a surprising manner, even to the names and parentage of their Spanish ancestors within the same period of time, with the accounts which their bards have given; as may be seen in a parallel drawn up with great accuracy by a late historical writer, and which will be given in its proper place. Such a great author of our own times having given this repute to those early records, not only without consulting them, but even also under the persuasion that there were none, it is expected

[o] Enquiry into the Life of Homer, p. 304.

expected—and I think not unreasonably—that it will add a credit to their more recent history, and command an attention from the learned, which has been hitherto but faintly given, if not absolutely denied. Indeed if some of their writers are to be credited, Ireland is perhaps the only country in the world, which made history a national cause of the greatest importance to the state; and where real transactions only are to be looked for in the earliest ages. According to them, these bards were not only endowed by the government and prime families, as already mentioned in the introduction, but that no means might be overlooked to convey genuine history to posterity, their productions were to undergo the solemn test and sanction of the great council of the nation in a triennial Parliament or convention; where such accounts only as were deemed worthy of credit were approved, and a memorial of them entered into the registers of that High Court. If any authors were found to pervert the truth, or impudently to prostitute it in order to serve the purposes of party, to misrepresent unfortunate or defeated virtue, to contradict or conceal undoubted facts with the same perverse intention of prejudicing fallen patriots, who had no other than historical truth for their vindication, in such cases the authors were degraded, and made liable to the penalties inflicted by a law against occasional and incendiary historians. If this account is to be depended on—and when stripped of the colouring with which it is heightened, and restrained to no higher a date than about three hundred years before the Christian æra, nobody can say that it is not—it gives a great idea of the wisdom of this people, and an authenticity to their history which is to be given, I believe, to no other nation under the sun. But whatever truth there may be in this early care of their records, there are concurrent testimonies

nies from foreign authors of the great antiquity of this island, which are not subject to the suspicion of that partiality, with which the criticks charge these domestic annals.

The inhabitants of this country should be considered in their history under four different ages. The first age, which may be called the Fabulous, comprehends a space of about four hundred years, from the earliest accounts of time, to the coming in of the Milesians from Spain; through the several colonies of Parthalianians, Nemedians, Belgians, and Danonians. The second period, which may be called the Obscure, begins with the Spanish invasion, and extends through a course of thirteen hundred years, to the arrival of St. PATRICK who converted the island. The third or middle age, which may be called the Enlightened, begins with the planting of the Gospel by that missionary, and extends to the conquest by the English; which contains a space of seven hundred and forty years. The latter age, which may be called the Historical, may be computed from the reign of HENRY the Second, 'till its final settlement at the revolution by King WILLIAM. In order to obviate all confusion that may arise, I shall carry on the history according to this division; and it shall be my business all along, as it should be of the writers of all ancient history whatever—and indeed it is all that I can do at this distant period—to clear away the truth from the great rubbish of fiction, and to polish it from the rust which it has acquired by time and ignorance.

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HERTY.
M^r.
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The first age of the Irish according to the division abovementioned, I have called the fabulous; and yet even in this age, it is the opinion of Bishop USHER, LOYD, CAMDEN, and many other of our best antiquarians, that there are several remains of true history which ought to be received.

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Even INNES who hath combated the credit of these high antiquities more than any writer that I have seen, allows that in this age "there was some kind of government without doubt in Ireland, probably that of a King or single chief or leader; and some uncertain traditions of more memorable transactions [p]". But be this as it may.—According to the custom of all other nations, in deriving their glory from their high antiquity, we are told in the Irish chronicles, that the country was first inhabited by one of NOAH'S nieces before the flood, and even before the art of navigation was at all known in the world. But the historians who give this up as a fiction, yet presume to people the island immediately after the dispersion of mankind at Babel—which is about three hundred years after the flood—with some of JAPHET'S posterity.

According to these historians, one of them named PARTHOLAN, the sixth in descent from MAGOG his second son, encouraged by the late attempt of NIMROD then newly possessor of the Assyrian monarchy, searched so far west, in order to discover a country where he might have the sole jurisdiction, as at last he came to Ireland. Here he settled himself, with his three sons and their wives, and a thousand men whom they brought with them under their command. They are so particular as to give us the day of the month when he landed, and not only the names of his three sons, but of a favourite greyhound also, of his servants, and of his oxen. To the sons they have given the character of very active and valiant men; who searching the island from side to side and in every part, made it the place of their habitation, and left remembrance of their names, which remain in these places at this day. It is said of the old man their father that he was driven out of Greece, where he had

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slain his father and mother in order to come at the crown; and landing here, had in a short space of time, with the assistance of so many hands, converted into plains a great part of the country overgrown with woods and thickets. In order to embellish the narrative, there is a formal story of his jealousy of his wife and one of his servants; which the old Bard who records it has amplified with some humour. It is reported in the chronicles of that time, that he found no more than three lakes and nine rivers in the island at his arrival; but that before his death which was thirty years after, seven lakes more broke out, the names of which are recorded.

X Though loughs and rivers are as old as the sea and land, and we see no new ones break out in our days, yet those great lakes abovementioned are so far from being like so many millstones to sink the credit of the history, in the opinion of Bishop HUTCHINSON, "that they are strong proofs, he says, not only that they who recorded them were led by the reality of the facts, but that they were wise men who wrote them for the instruction of posterity, that they might know which way nature moved. The most eminent geographers tells us of more and greater new lakes than these, which have covered the low grounds in many other countries;" of which he gives several instances [q]. Was the other part of the story probable, there would be no great difficulty in conceiving greater changes than those which the sea has made since the flood.

After this manner, say the historians, was Ireland first inhabited under the government of PARTHOLAN and his offspring; though some other rovers might have peopled it first from Britain. But they not having left the names of any governors that had been over them, nor how long they had continued, the

[q] Hutchinson's Defence of anc. Hist. p. 70.

the Irish æra begins from him. However to make their history still more heroic, according to ancient custom, they tell us that together with this posterity of JAPHET, or soon after, there came into this island certain godless people of the stock of NIMROD the descendants of HAM, called Fomorians or giants; not only on account of their bodily size and strength above the common proportion of other men, but also on account of their being wanderers who oppressed the weak with violence and rapine, in order to acquire the sovereignty to themselves. As a reason for their quarrelling with their fellow colonists, my manuscript says, that they repined at the blessing pronounced upon SHEM and JAPHET, and thought it necessary to withstand all lawful rule and dominion, lest the curse of slavery predicted by NOAH should light upon them. Wherefore withdrawing their obedience from their lawful governors of the tribe of JAPHET, they set up a chief of their own stock; maintaining his dominion by bringing the other subjects into continual bondage. Various was the success at different times between the original inhabitants and the invaders: to the great uneasiness and disadvantage of those who loved to live in quiet under their lawful rulers. But at last it was determined, by one general battle, either to subdue these proud rebellious tyrants, or nobly to lose their lives in support of liberty, and so be free from further misery.

However as many disputes and dissensions had arisen amongst themselves since their first settlement, which had weakened their forces in some measure, they judged it right to make a peace with one another, before they put the whole state to hazard in a general battle with the common enemy. Concluding therefore an agreement which settled all their differences, and a league being entered into to stand heartily by one another, and to unite their

strength against the Fomorians, they assembled their forces from every part of the island. The battel was soon joined; and each side fought with very dubious success, and with incredible valour and fury, for several hours: at last the victory inclined to the Partholanians, and a general slaughter ensued of the gigantic enemy. For the former being determined to deliver themselves from them for ever, that they might no more feel the miseries which they had before endured, made such a bloody use of their victory, that they never ceased the carnage 'till they had put every man and woman and child that could be met with to the sword. Nor did their revenge and animosity end with this: they would not vouchsafe to bury the carcases of the slain; but casting them out like so many dead dogs, the air of the whole island was so corrupted with the stench arising from them, as brought on a plague which swept off all the inhabitants and desolated the country for thirty years.

Thus ended the first colony which settled in Ireland, after a possession of thirty years. It must be owned that the historians differ in their relation of it very widely, and especially in the dates which they assign for its invasion and continuance; — and even in true history it would be no wonder. For in adjusting the account of the beginning of kingdoms, and the first inhabitants of a country, insuperable difficulties must be met with: and the higher enquiries are pursued, and the nearer we come to the origine of a nation, the more obscure are its antiquities; ending generally in poetical fictions that are scarce worthy of a place in historical writings. The most that can be said for the account which has now been given, is that it is grounded on probable facts, and that the retention of such facts evinces the early use of letters in this island. If ever such a colony invaded Ireland, it could not come

come from Greece, but either from Gaul or Britain. The little knowledge of navigation in those early ages would not admit of longer voyages; and the bringing them from remoter regions and describing their great exploits, we may be assured are nothing else, but the humour common in those days of swelling these originals of nations with the marvellous and heroic. Amidst the variety of dates in reciting the old accounts, which have probably been inserted by later writers who have copied and translated these accounts, I have thought it best to abide by those of O FLAHERTY; who took incredible pains to settle the chronology of the Irish history; and whose authority is allowed by all writers since to be most worthy of observation. According therefore to his computation—though I believe it may be antedated about an hundred and fifty years.—I shall now proceed with the history.

When the country had lain desolate and without inhabitants for thirty years another colony under the conduct of NEMEDIUS, a descendent of MAGOG, made a descent upon this island with his wife and four sons, and a thousand and twenty men in thirty-four ships from the Euxine sea. During the time of this colony, four other lakes broke out, the names of which are given in an old sonnet; and their chief having a mind to improve the soil and to cultivate the country, cut down twelve woods of a very large extent, and laid the land on all sides open. Having some African pirates in his train called Fomorians-- a name for no particular people but for any transmarine nation—and who at this time and afterwards settled in the North of Ireland, NEMEDIUS employed four of them, who were master builders, to erect two royal forts, which having finished with equal skill and expedition, the artists were the next morning by his orders put to

death ; lest they should afterwards, says the history, build other structures surpassing those of his in splendour and magnificence. Many of these Fomorian having at different times migrated into Ireland, were engaged by the Nemedians in three bloody battles, in which they were the conquerors, but in the fourth which was more desperate than all the rest, they were defeated, and the greatest part of them were cut in pieces.

The manuscript in my custody gives a different account in what follows from the printed history ; and as it is shorter, I shall give it the preference. It tells us, that NEMEDIUS and two thousand of his people dying of the plague, the Fomorians taking advantage of so great a weakening of the colony and of the death of their chief, stirring up a fresh revolt against them and overcoming them, oppressed them so unmercifully, that the Nemedians growing desperate were resolved to overcome or die. After a sharp and bloody contest, in which fortune was favourable to their attempt, they drove the Fomorians out of the island : but these returning from Africa with fresh forces, in their turn subdued the Nemedians, and made so great a slaughter of them, that almost all the remainder were determined to leave the island under their three chief commanders. Thus BREAC went to Thracia with his company from whom descended the Belgæ, of whom we shall hear further under the name of Firlbolgs ; JOBATH with his people went to Boœtia, who will make their appearance again under the name of Tuath-dedanans, and BRIDTAN repaired to England, from whom sprung the Brigantes. The psalter of Cashel, which is a record of great authority in the first and second age of the Irish, takes notice that the Welsh in Britain, are descended originally from this BRIDTAN, and some of the most ancient verses of their Bards confirm it.

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The Nemedians being dispossessed of the island which they had inhabited two hundred and seven-BELGI-teen years, the Africans were sole masters of it^{ANS.} without interruption from any invader : but differing^{AM. 2657} perpetually amongst themselves and measuring every thing by might, they were never able to arrive at any establishment, and the country was again dispeopled till two thousand six hundred and fifty-seven ; at which time the Belgians, called by the Irish Firl-bolgs—some of the descendents of NEMEDIUS and of those who had been driven away—took possession of it, with a colony of five thousand people under five principal leaders. Almost all their histories agree in a story of these people, which yet we must allow to be fabulous ; and therefore I shall not trouble the reader with it. A modern writer of their antiquities has said, [r] that the name of Firl-bogs, so often mentioned in the Irish manuscripts signifies no more than a creeping man, or one who lived in a cave ; and that there are great numbers of subterraneous caverns, and vaults dispersed about the island, in which the intelligent antiquarians affirm these people lived, or at least retreated to them in times of danger. It is well known that the Belgians who were a considerable people of Gaul, had large settlements in England, in its first and earliest state, from whence they might very naturally migrate into Ireland ; and as all our best historians and antiquaries agree, that the first peopling of Ireland was from hence, to which opinion they are led by a great number of concurrent circumstances, — “ more decisive with regard to the origin of nations, than fabulous traditions or the tales of annalists” —so, if I might be allowed to offer my conjecture upon a point of such high and obscure antiquity, it seems to me extremely probable, that the Belgic colony from South Britain were the first

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inhabitants

[r] Smith's State of the county of Corke, p. 402. vol. II.

inhabitants of Ireland ; and that all that has been said above, of NOAH'S niece and others before the flood, and of PARTHALON, NEMEDIUS, and the Fomorians since, together with the sailing of the Firl-bolgs from Greece, is a mere poetical fiction, according to the humour of those early days, of deducing the origin of nations from the remotest regions, and the highest point of time.

The reader will observe, that I mention this only as my own conjecture, and not from the authority of any writer ; but this conjecture is founded not in fancy and imagination, but on the probable events of things, and on reading over and comparing the ancient history of many people. It is so natural for the first inhabitants of Ireland to come from Britain, that it is irrational and absurd to suppose any thing else ; and of which many negative and positive proofs, which have been already hinted in the introduction, might be produced. NENNIUS, the oldest English writer that we have, has said, that Britain was peopled from Gaul in the third age of the world ; which he computes to be concluded at the birth of DAVID. According to the best chronologers, DAVID was born in less than twenty years after the year of the world two thousand nine hundred ; and therefore if we suppose the Belgians to have migrated from England in a short time after they were settled there,—in the third age of the world according to this computation—we shall find that it agrees exactly with the account of this colony given above ; at least it will appear, that their planting themselves in Ireland, in the year of the world two thousand six hundred and fifty-seven, was in the third age according to NENNIUS, and but about two hundred and fifty years before its expiration. We have not only the testimony of all their chronicles and historians, that these people invaded Ireland about that period, but it is also highly probable

ble to suppose, that England was not long inhabited, before the natural encrease of the people, and the vicinity of Ireland to it,—which might be seen from many parts of it in clear weather,—would tempt some of them to transport themselves thither, according to the custom of those times, to search after other settlements. Whether there is any strength in this conjecture, the reader must now determine; and I shall turn again to the history.

The five commanders of this colony, we are told, were the sons of DELA; and according to the form of government which prevailed in Britain and Gaul, which is another proof of their original, they divided the island into five parts; in each of which one of the brothers was head and called King; and SLANGEY who had the province of Leinster for his share, was monarch of the whole, or chief commander of the Pentarchy, in case of danger. In other cases, the several states or provinces had no dependance on each other, but had perpetual quarrels and contests among themselves. The chiefs of this colony were the first Kings in Ireland; but their power as well as authority was circumscribed within narrow bounds, and their administration was dangerous in proportion to its eminence. On every popular disgust they were obliged to account for their conduct before the severest of all courts, that of the people; this put their Kings under an absolute necessity of playing faction against faction, 'till death or victory determined their fate. In these sorts of contests among themselves, in rebellions against the monarchs, the Belgians possessed the island eighty years, through a succession of nine sovereign Chiefs; two of which commanded the country jointly, and at the end of that time were vanquished by another colony. The last of these monarchs, we are told, was a very fortunate Prince; peace and plenty were enjoy'd all over the island during

during his government; and he restrained the outrages of the people by laws, and kept them in obedience and civility by wholesome punishments.

In the story of these Belgians, given by all their writers, after their settlement upon the island, there is nothing fabulous or improbable in the least; and here I fix the date of the first peopling of Ireland by this colony from Britain. If I should be mistaken on a subject so obscure, it is no wonder; but this being no earlier than eight or nine hundred years after the dispersion of mankind, there is full space of time enough allowed, in my opinion, for the descendents of JAPHET to multiply, and elbow one another out from the more pleasant climates of the South, and to acquire settlements and possessions in these Northern regions. There is time enough allowed in this computation, for navigation to be learnt and propagated, for commerce to be extended, and for all the arts to be understood which are necessary to new establishments. Though mankind at first had a humour of keeping together, as MOSES tells us, yet they soon saw it was a vain unnatural project; and as God had made the earth wide and large, with great variety of blessings in every part of it, that his design must be to separate and spread them abroad, that they might communicate and exchange their treasures with one another. This taught them the wisdom of searching the bowels of the earth in every corner, of subduing and improving both sea and land, and of dividing and enjoying the fruits and blessings of all; and as there is a volatile part in all people that inclines them to move further and further than their breeders and the multitude, so the rising generation would travel and migrate fast by land, but faster much by the sea shore in little coasting vessels. Their merchants would carry out and set to sale the wares of their own country; and their pirates would go to fetch in plunder. These
travellers

travellers would magnify some of the wonders that they met with; and the remotest parts would be oftener mentioned by their historians, and in the sonnets of their Bards, than the places that lay nearer to them.

This is a rational foundation for supposing this country to be peopled, at least as early as I have placed it: and in fact our great chronologer TALLENTS, in laying before us the first peopling and the following changes of all the known nations of any eminence, has put Britain and Ireland together at the head of the column. The learned BOCHART also, in observing how GOD's promise of enlarging the borders of JAPHET were fulfilled by the great extent of the countries which were his portion, and in naming the countries included in it, puts Britain and Ireland as the two first of the catalogue which he gives of JAPHET's dominions. If the foregoing reasoning and authorities are not sufficient to convince the reader, that I have not peopled Ireland in an age too early, I have nothing further to offer, and must stand condemned in his opinion of a vain conjecture. But if it is tried in the two ways, in which all historical systems must be tried, whether it is consistent with probability, and whether it is supported by such evidence as it is reasonable to expect, I presume to think it will stand the test. For as the Jews, even before they had the history of MOSES, and before letters were invented, found ways to preserve their genealogies, and many of their chief actions down from ADAM, why should it be thought incredible, that the Irish, who were an observing people, should carry their history above thirteen hundred years before CHRIST, which is not half the way up to the beginning of heathen history? But I shall leave this conjecture now to support itself as it may, and shall resume the thread of the narration.

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DANNON. In the tenth year of the reign of the last Belgic monarch, another colony, called by the Irish Tuatha-de-Danans, of the posterity of NEMEDIUS, invaded the Island. We are told by some of the antiquaries, that they were called by this name, as being the descendents of the three sons of DANAN, who were so expert in the black art, and the mystery of charms and enchantments, that the inhabitants of the country where they lived distinguished them by the name of Gods. Other antiquaries as learned, say that this colony were so called because they were divided into three tribes; the first tribe which consisted of their principal leaders being named Tuatha, which signifies a commander; the second tribe were called Dee, meaning Gods, and were the Druids or priests; and the third had the name of Danan, which signifies art or poetry, and consisted of their Bards. They all agree however in telling a very marvellous tale of this colony; which made a fit subject for poetry, and suited well enough with the ignorance and superstition of the times in which they wrote. They tell us that the Nemedians who went with JOBATH into Boeotia, or Achaia, when they were driven out of Ireland by the Africans, as it hath been mentioned, settled near the city of Thebes; that here they learned the art of necromancy and enchantment, and had acquired such a magical power of working miracles, as to infuse fresh life and vigour into the bodies of those who were slain in battle; that having assisted the Athenians their neighbours in this manner in the wars they had with the Assyrians, the latter by the advice of a Druid, defeated their skill by a counter charm, of driving a stake of quick-beam through the dead bodies of their enemy; that perceiving their art to be no longer effectual, and for fear of falling into the hands of the Assyrians, they quitted the country, and wandered about from place

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place to place 'till they came to Norway ; where they were received with great hospitality by the inhabitants, and admired for their learning and skill in magick ; that the Danes assigned them four cities to teach school in, and having continued there some time, they went thence to Scotland, and made a settlement for seven years, at the end of which time they swarmed over to Ireland ; that when they came upon the coast they made use of their enchantments to screen them from the observation of the inhabitants ; that accordingly by their magic skill they formed a mist about them for three days and nights, and in this manner they disembarked and marched into the country without being discovered, 'till they sent to the Belgians to demand the kingdom and give them battle ; and that from one of the Danish cities they brought the Stone of destiny.

This famous stone, it seems, had two wonderful properties that are recorded in their sonnets : the one that in whatever country it was preserved, a prince of the Scythian race would undoubtedly govern ; and the other, that when the monarchs of Ireland were enthroned upon this stone, if a good choice was made, it would yield a strange sort of noise ; and if they had chosen ill, no sound was heard to issue from it ; but that it lost this property at the birth of CHRIST, when all other oracles became dumb. If such a fact there ever was relating to this stone, there is no doubt the sound was emitted by some artifice of the Druids ; and therefore when Christianity prevailed to their final overthrow, it is no wonder that its pretended oracular virtue should be at an end. Under a full persuasion of the truth of its first property, a Prince of the blood royal of Ireland, about whose name historians are divided, having subdued the country of North Britain, resolv'd to be crowned upon it as the first King of Scotland ; and accordingly requested his
relation.

relation the Irish monarch to send him the stone, that he might perpetuate the succession in his family. From this time it was preserved with great esteem and devotion in the abbey of Scoon, the royal seat of the Pictish and Scottish Kings, 'till EDWARD the First, of England, who was weak enough to believe the virtues attributed to it, and having a mind to be King of Scotland, brought it forcibly away from thence, and had it placed under the inauguration chair in Westminster-Abbey. It is still preserved there to this day, but by the name of JACOB's stone; from a notion among the vulgar that it is a part of the Patriarch's pillar. It must be owned that the coronation of the Kings of England over this stone seems to confirm its title of the Stone of destiny; but it reflects no great honour on the learning or understanding of the nation, to retain a remnant of such ridiculous Pagan superstition in so important and solemn an act. But to return.

Having given the reader the fabulous account of this colony of the Tuatha-de-Danans, it is proper now to lay before him the probable history, as it is related by the most authentic writers. These people were no other than the Danonians of Great Britain who had swarm'd into Scotland; and according to the humour of those times, had after a while sailed to Ireland in quest of a new settlement; where some that were before only subordinate might have the chief command. As soon as they were landed they burnt all their shipping, to intimate their resolution of never more returning. Thus we know it was the custom of the Goths and Vandals, when they found their country too full to choose out their youth by lot, and send them to seek their fortunes, with some of the younger sons of their Princes at their head: it was in vain for them to look back, for as there was no room for them.

them at home, they must either find out new places abroad or die in the attempt. With such sentiments or resolutions the Danonian colony invaded Ireland; and after a bloody and desperate engagement, defeated the Belgians on the plain of Moytura with the slaughter of ten thousand men. Thus vanquished, and having lost their monarch in the field of battle, the Belgians disdaining to live in subjection to the conquerors, retreated to the neighbouring islands of Aran, Ila, Man, and some of the Hebrides; in hopes of an opportunity to regain a country which they had been deprived of by force and power. They had not waited above twenty years before such an opportunity presented. For some other wanderers having found the way to this island, and being pleased with its climate and fertility, had an intention of settling with them; but not agreeing with the Danonians, the country once more became the seat of discord.

In the midst of these dissensions, the Belgians were allowed, if not invited to return, in order to assist the weaker party against their former enemies. This conjunction produced the second battle of North-Moyturey near the lake of Arrow; a place surrounded with high hills, great rocks, and narrow defiles, and therefore probably pitched upon on purpose by the weaker side. Here however the Danonians were again victorious, and gave their adversaries a signal overthrow; which makes a memorable æra in the ancient history. In the first battle NUADHA their King lost his hand, which was supplied by one made of silver, that gave him the surname of Silver-handed; and in the last battle he lost his life. As every abortive attempt for liberty serves only to redouble the distresses of a conquered and the insolence of a victorious people, so the unfortunate Belgians remaining in the island smarted

smarted grievously under the tyranny of their invaders, during the continuance of their power. They were obliged to bear all the hardships which such an early age had taught their oppressors to inflict : and their conquerors proved like those of most other countries ; teaching mankind a lesson in every age almost without exception, that the most violent assertors of liberty mean it only for themselves. Some of our English historians have added to this account, that BRENNIUS the brother of the British Monarch, having a fleet at this time just ready to transport some forces into Gaul, diverted his expedition, and made a push for the conquest of this island. But the inhabitants, though quarrelling with the utmost rage against each other, yet were not in a disposition to receive a conqueror over them all from a foreign country. The Irish historians are all of them silent on this fact ; and there is probably no truth in it at all. The government of the Danonians, under nine succeeding Monarchs, continued for an hundred and ninety seven years, 'till the arrival of the Milesians from the Northern parts of Spain put an end to their name and nation.

These several colonies lived in Ireland, there is no doubt, in the same manner which their parent nations did in Gaul and Britain. They fed on the spontaneous productions of the earth, on the milk of their kine, and on what they could acquire by their skill in hunting, shooting with darts, and fishing. These last exercises, which were so necessary for the support of the Northern nations, became of course their chief employment ; and such employment rendered them fierce, hardy, and impatient of restraint ; to which their never living in large villages or towns did not a little contribute. The flesh of such animals as they could take served them for their food, and the skins contributed to
their

their rayment. It is no wonder therefore if Ireland was more coveted and peopled than most other Northern countries ; as no other administered better to this sort of life, as none was richer in the necessaries which were the support of it, such as the fresh and salt-water fisheries, and as none was more removed from the dread of the overbearing and enslaving nations of the continent. This may serve for an epitome of their history in private life ; and as to their public affairs, little more can be related of this last colony, than the names and genealogies of their monarchs, which are in my opinion totally immaterial. The only thing which I can find that deserves any notice, is that their idols were a log of wood, a plowshare, and the sun : and that one of their Monarchs, who had been educated by the widow of the last Belgic Prince, whose name was TAILTE, in honour to her memory instituted the assembly of Tailtean on the first of August every year, for tilts and tournaments like the old Olympic games ; which is a day still distinguished by the name of Lughnasa from this LUGHAIDH King of Ireland. In short the want of letters and arts among them would not permit much to be recorded of them with any certainty. They all spoke dialects of the ancient Celtic, as the names of men and places plainly shew : And this circumstance probably rendered the several invasions of the island the more successful, by a previous concert, through the means of traffic, of the factious and discontented with powerful foreigners. To this we must attribute the easy conquest of the Danonians by that able and martial colony from Spain ; who of all the Celtic nations have made the greatest figure in the history of these Western countries.

Here then we are arrived at the end of the first age, which may be called the fabulous, through which we have wandered, though not implicitly,

yet without an absolute unbelief of the latter part of it: And although many things are omitted which are recorded by other writers, yet they appeared to me to be too insignificant, or too ridiculous to find a place in such history. What is here related and not excepted against, though it is accounted fabulous, may be true; but the other would not admit of that supposition. The succeeding æra upon which we are now entering, is not without its fables neither: And though we have more light to enable us to distinguish them from the truth, yet is dim and uncertain, requires great and fixed attention, and sometimes shines so very feebly as to be scarce discerned at all. I have said this, that the reader may not be disappointed, and expect more entertainment than he can meet with, in following a guide who is himself not very well instructed. A wasteful war of two hundred years, with a Northern barbarous people, and a succeeding anarchy of upwards of three hundred more, caused such a destruction to their archives and public libraries, as hardly any other, but that of the people whose story they conveyed, could equal.

The remains of those records, says Mr. O'CONNOR, like inscriptions on old medals and broken columns, have been so much buried and defaced, and even treated contemptuously by the new inhabitants, that instead of wondering how little is to be found of this nation, which once gave learning to all Europe, we may rather be surprized that a single fragment is left of it. A spirit of curiosity and improvement, and we would hope of candour and impartiality, have of late years brought these fragments from the obscurity in which they lay buried for ages: and the consistent testimony of foreign and domestic writers confirming them in spite of all our prejudices must convince us, that there are genuine materials for an authentic

tic history of Ireland, of great antiquity, capable of affording instruction and entertainment to the ablest and most inquisitive. For how much soever there may be of fable in the primæval accounts that have been recited, and though the history of the period which is to follow, is allowed to be uncertain as to particulars, for the first seven hundred years, yet there are characters of persons and things engraved so deeply, and so universally agreed about, that without a scepticism which is unwarrantable, it is impossible to reject them. The arrival of these people who subdued the Danonians, and settled themselves and flourished in this island for almost twelve hundred years, forms a principal epoch in the Irish history; and therefore necessarily points out the conclusion of this book.

THE
HISTORY
OF
IRELAND.

BOOK II.

MILESI-
ANS.

AM. 2934

ACCORDING to what hath been observed already in the introduction to this work, besides some of the old Celtæ or Gauls from Britain, who passed over into Ireland in a very early age of the world, there were also other colonies of Scythians, called Celtiberians, who had peopled Spain and Gaul, and from thence went into the British islands : and though the Irish historians have been very particular in tracing these people to their original descent from JAPHET, from their ancient chronicles, yet it does not appear to me to be the business of this History. Their traditions may probably deserve the attention of antiquaries and

and criticks, as much as other primæval accounts of ancient kingdoms; for it has been proved that they had the use of letters, near as early as the invasion of this Spanish colony, communicated to them by the Phenicians and Egyptians, with whom they had had frequent commerce. But as all nations had a passion for very early and heroic antiquity, such traditions must be read with caution, and with great allowance for this favourite passion.

However supposing them to be ever so accurate and authentic, it does not seem to me to be the business of this History, to give a circumstantial and minute detail—as the Irish writers have done—of the genealogy, employment, travels, and adventures, of the progenitors of this colony before their migration into Ireland. It seems to be sufficient to our purpose here, if we only say from these traditions handed down from their first historians, that the Milesians were the descendents of a long line of heroes, who figured in Egypt, and filled the continent with their military exploits: and that these names are celebrated also in the traditions of other learned nations, which shews that they are not without foundation: and though these accounts have been so obscured by the poetical supplements of their Bards, as to induce the greatest part of our criticks to pass by the whole as fabulous, yet by a collation of the Irish chronicles with the oldest writers on the continent, it appears to be a fact, as well ascertained as any fact whatever of such an ancient date, that the Egyptians having made a conquest of Spain, about a thousand years before the Christian æra, and there being a great scarcity of all the products of the earth from a series of dry years, which made it difficult for all the inhabitants to be sustained, a colony of the natives went to Ireland.

It must be observed that this account does not want confirmation from foreign history. But what

more than any thing puts the Spanish original of the Irish out of dispute are the parallel antiquities of other ancient nations confirming those of Ireland : such especially as we are furnished with by the great Sir ISAAC NEWTON, mentioned before. These have been drawn out with accuracy by Mr. O'CONNOR, as bringing an additional and unexpected degree of credit to the Irish history, and which the reader will find in opposite columns of foreign testimonies, and native Irish [a]. These observations being made, in order to give a weight and authority to our materials, as far as the use which any good writer makes of them, I shall now proceed with the course of the History.

The.

[a] Foreign Testimonies.

I. An emigrant nation of Iberians, from the borders of the Euxine and Caspian seas, settled anciently in Spain. (a)

II. A colony of Spaniards by the name of Scots settled in Ireland in the 4th age of the world. (b)

III. The Phœnicians who first introduced letters and arts in Europe, had an early commerce with the Iberian Spaniards. (c)

[a] Native IRISH.

I. The Iberian Scots, a people bordering on the Euxine sea, were expelled their parent country, and after several adventures settled ultimately in Spain. [a]

II. Kineza Scait—the Scots and the posterity of the Iberian Scots were a colony of Spaniards, who settled in Ireland about a thousand years before CHRIST. [b]

III. The ancient Iberian Scots learned the use of letters on the continent from a celebrated PHŒNIUS, from whom they took the name of Phœnicians. [c]

IV. NIL,

(a) Ruævus ex Appian, ad Æneid lib. Newton Chron. Dubl. edit. p. 10.

(b) Buchan passim. Ware chap. 1. Hist. Dissert. by Ward, p. 121.

(c) Strabo, lib. iii. Univer. Hist. v. 18. Dub. edit. p. 382, 3.

[a] Lebar Gabala, passim. Keating, book i. passim. Ogygia, p. 66.

[b] Leb. Gab. pass. Ogy. p. 83. Ward, p. 318.

[c] Leb. Gab. pass. Ogy. p. 63, 221, 349, Keat. book i.

The old inhabitants of Spain, being made uneasy with the several inroads of the Phœnicians and Egyptians who had invaded and subdued them, and the country becoming unfruitful through frequent droughts, a particular tribe, of the name of BREOGHAN, were determined to seek out another settlement. Besides it is agreed amongst all foreign ancient authors, that the goodness of their climate and their laborious exercises, joined to their plain simple diet, which made them strong and long lived, were the occasion of their multiplying so fast,

MS.
KEATING.
O FLAHER.
COMERFORD.
Differtat.
HOLING.

O 4 that

IV. NIL, BELUS, SIHOR, OSIHOR, TOTH, OGMIUS, &c. were famous Egyptian warriors who filled the world with the fame of their exploits. (d)

IV. NIHUL, BILEUS, SRUO, ASRU, TAIT and OGAMAN, were mighty in Egypt and in several other countries. [d]

V. The Egyptian conqueror of Spain got the emphatical name of the Hero of HERCULES. (e)

V. A great hero famous in Egypt got the name of GOLAMH and Milen-Espaine, i. e. the conqueror or hero of Spain. [e]

VI. NIL, SIHOR, OSIHOR, &c. succeeded to the Phœnicians in cultivating and instructing several nations. (f)

VI. NIUL, SRU, ASRU, &c. succeeded to PHENIUS in teaching the use of arts and letters. [f]

VII. In the days of HERCULES, or the Egyptian conqueror of Spain, a great drought is reported to have burdened a great part of the earth. (g)

VII. The conquest of Spain, together with a drought which happened at the same time, forced the Iberian Scots to flee into Ireland. [g]

VIII. Thé HERCULES, or Hero of Spain is reported to be the son of BELUS. (h)

VIII. Milea-Espaine, or the hero of Spain was the son of BELEUS. [h]

(d) Newton's Chron. passim.

(e) Newton, ibid.

(f) Newton, ibid.

(g) Newton, p. 98, 231. Ovid. Metam. lib. ii.

(h) Newton, passim.

[d] Leb. Gab. ubi sup. passim.

[e] Omnes Hibern.

[f] Leb. Gab. pass. Keating ex Pfalt. Cashel, book i.

[g] Ibid.

[h] Ibid. Ogy. p. 83.

that they were often obliged to send abroad colonies into other parts of the world. The Irish writers mention a prophecy of one of the Druids of the tribe above named, that they were to settle in a Western island. Whatever might be their motive, it was agreed after some consultations upon this affair, to send ITH, one of their leaders of the Milesian house, a Prince of great valour and experience, and of many excellent qualities, in order to make a discovery whether Ireland, which from many circumstances it appears was not unknown to them, was such a country as might induce them to settle in it, and was sufficient to sustain their people. According to this resolution, a ship being fitted out, and manned with an hundred and fifty chosen soldiers, ITH set sail from Galicia and landed in the north of Ireland. Upon their arrival, they were interrogated by some of the Danonians who then possessed it, as to their commander and the business on which they came. As they all spake the same Celtic language, the Spaniard in return for the answer he gave them, demanded the name of the island and of its sovereign chief: and being informed that it was under the government of three brothers, who were then in the north of Ulster disputing about the jewels of their progenitors, he marched to them with a guard of an hundred men, leaving the other fifty to secure the ship.

The usual ceremonies being past at this interview, he told the Irish Princes, that having mistaken his course at sea he was obliged to land in their country, but had no intention of staying in it any longer than was necessary to repair his ship. The three monarchs perceiving him by his conversation to be a man of abilities, agreed to make him their umpire, and refer their dispute to his decision. After a full information from all the parties, ITH awarded the jewels to be divided into three equal portions

portions between them ; and observing the country as he passed through it to be very plentiful, he added that if the island was thus divided, it might be sufficient to content them, and obviate any quarrels. When he had thus compromised their dispute, had taken his leave, and was returning back to his ship, the brother kings considering what great encomiums he had passed upon the island, concluded that, if he returned home, he would bring an army back sufficient to take it from them. It was therefore determined, that one of the three should pursue him with a force superior to his, in order to take him prisoner and prevent his return to Spain. The Milesian leader finding himself pursued, and guessing at the occasion, faced about in the rear of his little army ; and though he was wounded in a battle with his pursuer, he made good their retreat to the ship ; in which he died on his passage of the wounds which he had received in that engagement. The body being exposed to his countrymen on the ship's arrival, and the treacherous circumstances of his death related, an expedition to Ireland, in order to revenge it on his cowardly enemies, was immediately resolved upon, and concerted. Nor was their revenge the only motive to this invasion : their ambition and domestic difficulties, which had determined them to send ITH on the discovery of the island and its inhabitants, co-operated with their resentment of his undeserved fate.

Though the English writers of the Irish history give a different relation of this affair, yet I make no difficulty in rejecting it, as it is utterly inconsistent with probability and chronology : And it may not be improper to take this opportunity to inform the reader, that as the Irish writers on the one hand, are very desirous to exalt their antiquities, and the honour, fame, and splendour of their nation ; so on the other hand, the English authors seem all agreed

in depreciating the inhabitants, and misrepresenting the transactions which would throw any lustre upon Ireland. They neither of them pay that strict regard to truth and impartiality, which is an essential duty in all historians; though except in the fabulous age we have gone through, and in the beginning of the succeeding period, the Irish, in my opinion, may be said to deviate much less than the English writers: And yet it is certainly more excusable, to deviate through a regard for our native country, than through a malignant intention of blackening a people, over whom we have got the dominion. But however in order to come as near the truth as I can in the following work, I think it is the safest way to take the middle course between them; and what the Irish historians have confessed to the dishonour or the reproach of their own nation, and what the English have allowed which contributes to the glory and reputation of it, we may receive, I believe, without distrust or hesitation.

In reciting the Spanish invasion by the Milesians, I have already said that I prefer the Irish history; because of the greater consistency with itself, and with probability, and because of the concurrent testimony of all their ancient chronicles. We are there told, that in thirty ships and under forty commanders of great valour, from whom many places in Ireland have obtained their names, the Milesian colony landed on the coast of Ireland; though not 'till they had been obliged to sail round the island in order to find a place to disembark at. A very natural fog, which the Bards have poetically improv'd into an enchantment of the Danonians to prevent their descent, made the island resemble a hogs-back, the name of which they gave it, and concealed the harbours from the invaders for some time. At last they landed with some difficulty in the West of Munster, and from thence marched in
good

good order to the palace of Teamor, where the three Irish Kings kept their court. The relation of this transaction, as the historians have given it from their Bards, has too much the air of fable to be credited, or to be transcribed into this work.

The fact, when it is stripp'd of this disguise which has obscured it, may be represented in this manner. AMERGIN, one of the principal leaders of this colony, and a son also of the great MILESUS who was lately dead, addressing himself to the Danonian Kings, demanded their resignation of the government of the island, or to determine their superiority by a battle; in revenge of the death of the valiant ITH their countryman and relation, whom these Princes had slain in a treacherous manner against the laws of nations. The Danonians being surpris'd at this resolute challenge, own'd they were not prepared to decide the quarrel by dint of arms, as they had no standing forces that they could bring instantly into the field: but as they perceived he was a man of great authority among his people, and they had an opinion of his candour, they would submit to any other conditions that he would impose. AMERGIN replied to this, that they would all reembark and sail out of the harbour; and if the Danonians could hinder their landing, they would return again to Spain, and make no more attempts upon the island; but if, in defiance of their power, his colony could reland themselves upon the shore, the Danonians should resign the government and become their tributaries.

These conditions being accepted, the Milesians instantly marched back, and reembarked: but before they had sailed quite out of the harbour, a violent tempest arose, dispers'd their fleet, beat some of them to pieces against the rocks, in which five of the sons of MILESUS perished, with their people, and had well nigh proved fatal to all the rest.

Three

Three of them however survived this dreadful tempest, and with the remainder of their colony after two bloody actions with the Danonians, in which their three Princes were slain, entirely vanquished them. Though the Milesians have given, in their written records by their Bards, the whole merit of this rapid conquest to their own skill and valour, yet some of their historians make no doubt of their being joined and assisted by the Belgians who remained in the island; and who would certainly unite themselves to any invaders in order to be revenged of their old masters. To confirm this conjecture, they tell us that HEREMON, the first Monarch of Ireland of the Milesian race, conferred great privileges on that people; even granting them the whole province of Connaught, where they grew to be a numerous, martial, and very respectable body, governed by their own laws and provincial sovereigns, till even the third century of Christianity. In this manner ended the Danonian government in this island, after continuing above an hundred and ninety-seven years; and the few who survived the slaughter of the Milesians, either submitted and became incorporated with them, or else, which is more probable as we never hear any more of them, transferred themselves to some other country. From some of the poetical fragments translated in Keating's history, it appears that there is still extant a beautiful description of the battles between the Milesians and the Danonians; in which are celebrated the funeral rites that were performed for two of the Spanish Druids who were killed, and the slaughter of the consorts to the three Danonian Princes. These fragments not only give us a great idea of their poetry, but also shew in what manner all their public transactions were delivered down and registered by their Bards.

The

The antiquaries are not agreed in their opinion of the division of the island by **HEBER** and **HEREMON**, the two Milesian Princes, after the conquest of it from the Danonians; neither have any of them pretended to explain the reason, why **AMERGIN**, the third surviving son, had no part of the country allotted for his share; any further than by telling us, that he was a poet, a philosopher, an historian, and a legislator: and perhaps according to the political system of those times, these professions might exclude him from any share in the rule and government of the state. But many such difficulties as these occur, in tracing out all ancient history, which it is impossible to reconcile. The division which seems to be grounded on the best authority, is that **HEBER** possessed himself of the two provinces of Munster; that Leinster and Connaught fell to the share of **HEREMON**; and that they apportioned the province of Ulster among their nephews and principal officers in the expedition. The Princes built palaces, and the Chiefs castles—such as they were—on their several estates, where they resided with their families. But their first employment consisted in making room for themselves in a country that was over-run with woods; and in this they laboured so assiduously, that the names of the Monarchs and great Men who principally promoted it, are mentioned with honour in their histories. The clearing of the land in this manner gave rise to agriculture; whose vestiges are now to be seen, in some of the most waste and uncultivated parts of the island. If this does not afford a proof of the superior numbers, it is at least a proof of the superior industry, of the ancient inhabitants over the present; and though the old Milesians had an invincible prejudice against mechanical handicraft occupations, which were carried on by the remaining Belgians or their slaves, yet,

yet that agriculture was in high repute and estimation.

As many changes and divisions were made in the several tribes, through their mutual animosities, and they separated from the possessions that were first assigned them, it is unnecessary, if not absurd, to point out the possessions which belonged to the several families at the first division of the island by the Milesian race. It is sufficient to relate here, that HEREMON and HEBER, the two Princes of the blood, with the consent of their brother AMERGIN, who assumed the dignity of supreme Druid, Bard, Philosopher, and Judge, having divided the kingdom between them, reigned jointly for a year. The former, being possessed of the provinces of Leinster, and Connaught, according to the division above mentioned, built a royal palace in the county of Meath; called, in honour of TEA his Queen who had the direction of it, by the name of Teamor, which is now generally pronounced Tara, and will be often mentioned by that name in the following history. But this Monarch erected another royal seat, and kept his court at Airgiodroh in the province of Leinster. What sort of palaces these were, if the reader had not seen in the Introduction, he would easily guess, when he is told that two of them were built by this Prince, within a year after the conquest of the Danonians.

In the Milesian expedition to this western island, were a musician and a poet, both of great eminence in their profession; and in so much esteem with the two Princes, that there was a contest to which of them the artists should belong. It was at last however agreed that they should be separated, and the division should be determined by lot, which gave the poet to HEREMON, and the musician to the share of HEBER. Though the writers are not to be credited, which tell us, that the southern parts

parts of the country are from hence observed to be more particularly delighted and skilled in musick, yet it is possible that this contest between the Princes in the infancy of their settlement, might give birth, as the old chronicles expressly tell us, to that laudable custom among the Irish of treating their poets, historians, and men of learning, with honour and liberality.

The controversy for the possession of these famous artists was scarcely amicably adjusted, and the animosities which it had occasioned healed up and forgotten, but another difference arose of a more important nature, and attended with more fatal consequences. Two out of three of the most beautiful and fertile vallies in the island having fallen to the lot of HEBER, and his Queen being a woman of immense pride and vanity, had set her heart upon the third, which lay in the division of HEREMON; that she might be called the Queen of the three vallies. As unreasonable as this might be for her to insist on, she would admit of no excuses from her husband, till he had demanded it of his brother, and in case of refusal attempted it by force of arms. In short, her pride had got so much the better of her, that she passionately vowed she would never rest, till the third valley was added to the possession of HEBER, and she had acquired the title above-mentioned. But if one lady had pride enough to put her upon encroaching on the territories of another, the wife of HEREMON had a spirit which would not suffer her to give way; and she instigated her husband to insist upon his title, and defend his right. Thus determined on both sides, the one to demand and the other not to comply, a war between the Princes became inevitable; and their forces being drawn out on the plains of Geisöl, a desperate battle was fought;

fought ; in which the army of the aggressor was defeated, and **HEBER** himself lost his life.

This is a very early instance, it must be owned, of the fatal effects of female pride ; and it shews that human nature has in every age of the world been still the same. Here is an example of a woman, yielding to the solicitations of pride and vanity, till they made her turbulent and contentious, unhappy in herself, and uneasy to those about her : here is a Prince her husband, weak enough to sacrifice his repose, his possessions, and even his life to her ambition ; and from that day to this, a thousand events of the same fatal kind have happened. For tho' all history is nothing more than the history of the human heart, yet as few read it with a view to that improvement, so it may be said perhaps, that not many are the better for reading history ; and the generality want as much to be taught the workings and evasions of the heart, as though they had never been laid before them in any language. The instructions that are to be drawn from this instance before us to both the sexes, tho' very important, are too obvious to be recited.

**HERE-
MON.**

AM.2935

Though **HEREMON** had gained a compleat victory over his brother, and reigned from that time monarch of the whole island, yet his government was frequently opposed and interrupted by the friends of **HEBER**, and he was obliged to take the field. In one of these engagements, about two years after the first, he slew his only surviving brother **AMERGIN** abovementioned, the sovereign Druid and Philosopher of the island ; which probably put an end to the civil war, as we hear of no more insurrections in this reign. The peace of the country being thus established, the historians tell us he divided it among his nephews, and chief officers ; and particularly that he gave one of the provinces

to a commander that was a descendant of the ancient Belgians, as it was said before, and reserved the sovereignty to himself.

In a short time after this settlement, as it is related in the psalter of Cashell, the Picts of Thrace landed with some forces on the Eastern coast of Ireland; and the reason for their coming thither, we are told, was this. These people being subsidies to the King of Thrace, who had an intention to debauch the daughter of their general, they found means to destroy him; and then leaving the country, and marching through the dominions of several Princes till they came to France, they were kindly entertained in the pay of that monarch, and having a tract of land assigned them they built a city to which they gave the name of Pictavium, and which is now called Poitiers. The King of France being informed, during this transaction of the uncommon beauty of the daughter of the Pictish General, entertained a design like that of the Thracian Prince, and was at all events determined to possess her. But his intrigue being discovered, and the General incensed at this fresh attempt on his daughter's honour, collecting his people together, and seizing by stratagem on some of the French ships, he put to sea and landed in the harbour of Wexford.

About the time of their arrival here, some of the Britons had made an attempt upon this island, and committed some depredations on the borders of the river Slane. Wherefore the Governor of Leinster, perceiving the Picts to be a valiant and warlike people, gave them a kind reception, and solicited their assistance against the Britons; who made use of poisoned arrows and other weapons in their attacks. The Bard who relates this, and who knew that a poem subsists by wonder and surprise, has invented a curious story to embellish

the narrative, suitable to the ignorance of the times he lived in ; but which KEATING and others relate very gravely for true history. They tell us, that this savage custom of the Britons being made known to the Pictish general, he produced a Druid of his train well skilled in physick ; who as an antidote against the poison, ordered holes to be dug near the field of battle, into which they should pour the milk of an hundred and fifty white faced cows ; and as the Men were wounded with the poisoned weapons they should be bathed in this milk, which would expel the venom and enable them to return to the combat. After such a wonderful assistance as this, it is easy to believe what follows, that the Britons were defeated and driven off the island.

The Picts having been thus useful to their allies, and taking a liking to the country, formed a design of possessing themselves of the province of Leinster, and there to settle with their families. But this conspiracy being discovered in time to the King of Ireland, HEREMON immediately levied an army much superior to the Picts, in order to oblige them to evacuate the Island without the least delay. Finding their project thus defeated before they could attempt its execution, these new guests were obliged to make their submission to the King. A very pompous speech is put into the mouth of their commander by some of the old writers ; and much consultation, they tell us, was had among the Milesians—who are now to be called the Irish—about what was to be done with the Pictish people. At length it was determined to be on several accounts inexpedient that they should remain upon the island ; which being notified to them, as also that there were other islands on the north east which were uninhabited, they were desired to pass thither with all convenient speed.

speed. To this the Picts very readily consented ; but as they were deficient in females of rank, they desired some of the Irish might accompany them to their new settlement ; and to engage them they entered into a solemn covenant, that if the government of the country should fall into their hands, the descendants from the female line should have the preference. On this condition, and with these assurances, three of the Irish widow ladies, with the King's consent, were married to some of their chiefs, and accompanied them in the expedition to the islands bordering upon Scotland, where they settled. The Irish historians quote the testimony of BÉDE in confirmation of this account ; who says “ that a nation of the Picts from Scythia, setting to sea in a few long ships, after they had, by the varying of the wind, sailed round the coast of Briton, came at last into Ireland, where they found the nation of the Scots, among whom they desired a settlement, but their request was denied ; and that they were persuaded to go to the northern parts of Britain, and obtained wives of the Scots in Ireland.”

It must be owned that this is a confirmation of the fact, but not of the time ; and in my opinion the historians have placed the incursion of the Picts rather too early. But be this as it may, they certainly were not called by that name till new colonies came over to seek out for habitations. Whether they settled themselves at this time on the north side of the Frith or not, it appears clearly from bishop STILLINGFLEET [b,] that these were the people who became afterwards the Caledonian Britons, whose original was from Scythia ; who in the time of AGRICOLA were a very considerable people both for number and valour, and who were remarkable in antiquity for painting their bodies.

P 2

But

[b] Antiq. of the Brit. churches, p. 243.

But to proceed now with the history.—The Picts, they tell us, acquired the sovereignty of the country through seventy successive Kings, in the Hebrides, and in the north of Scotland, from this settlement ; but that the Druid who had assisted them with his skill against the poison of the British weapons, and five more of note among the Picts, were allowed to remain in Ireland, with estates assigned for their support. The chronicles also relate; that a great number of the descendents of BREOGHAN called Brigantes, and of the Danonians that still remained in Ireland, were at this time sent away with the Picts to the northern part of Scotland, who afterwards possessed themselves of large settlements in England. This is another proof to me, that the coming of the Picts is placed a great deal earlier than it should be in the Irish history ; because according to BEDE, it was long after this, that any of the Irish “ hearing of the goodness of the country of Scotland, either by force or friendship took possession of it.” But in matters of such remote antiquity, I am much rather inclined to doubt than to determine.

HEREMON, the first monarch of Ireland, dying after a reign of thirteen years, the crown is said to devolve upon his three sons ; who ruling over the island jointly for three years, and one of them then dying, and the other two being slain by the four sons of HEBER, they governed jointly likewise for a year, and were in their turn taken off by a remaining son of HEREMON ; who living but ten years after was succeeded by his son EITHRIAL, Monarch of the whole kingdom for twenty years. He is said to have been a Prince, not less remarkable for his learning, than his military accomplishments, and to have written with his own hand the history and adventures of the Milesian colony. He was killed in battle by a son of HEBER, who was the first sole Monarch of Ireland of his family. We hear nothing more of him, though
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he reigned thirty years, than that he fought, five and twenty battles with the line of HEREMON ; in every one of which, except the last in which he lost his life, he came off victorious.

His successor who was of the Heremonian line, ^{TIGHER-}and whose name was TIGHERMAS, was continu-^{MAS.}ally alarmed with the pretensions of the Heber family ; with whom it is said he fought seven and ^{A. M.}twenty battles with great success, in which most of ^{3011.}the Heberians were destroyed. Though all the Antiquaries agree that he was the first that introduced idolatry, and erected Pagan altars in the island, at one of which, they say, he perished by a judgment from heaven, with three parts of his people, as he was worshipping his idol, yet they are not agreed about the length of his reign ; some assuring us it was fifty, and others but three and twenty years ; and some saying there was an interregnum of seven years after his death, and others none at all. Amidst this uncertainty, and in all others relating to the chronology of the history, I am determined, as I said before, by the authority of O FLAHERTY ; who declares for the interregnum, and finishes the reign of TIGHERMAS in three and twenty years. Besides many streams which now began first to flow, a gold mine was first discovered in this reign near the river Liffey ; the colours of blue and green and purple were invented ; and the people began to be more polite in their habits, and to adorn themselves with dress.

At the end of the interregnum, a son of ITH, that was formerly mentioned, assumed the govern-^{ACHY I.}ment of the island ; and though his reign was de-^[c.]termined ^{A.M.3041}

P 3

[c.] The reader is desired to observe that the Monarchs of the same name which are here distinguished by first and second, &c. are not as they stand in the old Irish history, but as they appear in this ; where the names of several of them are not mentioned.

terminated in four years, by being killed in battle, yet in this time he established it as a law throughout the kingdom, that the quality of every person should be known by the number of colours upon his clothes. Thus a slave or servant was to be seen with no more colours than one; a soldier might have two, but an officer was permitted three; the apparel of gentlemen, who kept a hospitable table for the entertainment of strangers, was to be distinguished by four colours; the nobility were allowed to have five; and the Kings and families of royal blood were not to exceed six. Of the same number might the habit of Scholars, Philosophers, Bards, and Men of learning in all professions, consist. The wisdom of this institution has been much extolled, in producing an emulation among men of letters, and in procuring esteem and respect at a very easy rate. It is indeed to be wondered at, and much lamented, that no institution of this kind—an institution to regulate the dress of the different ranks of people—should have ever found its way into this country in which we live; where, if we were to guess at those we see by their appearance only, we should take the merchant and his family, the squire, and even the tradesman, to be lords and ladies of the first distinction: a piece of impertinence in dress, which creates indecency and confusion, and which a wise state should not tolerate. The Monarch who gave birth to this institution in Ireland, was slain by two descendents of Ir, the first royal Milesian who died in the island, who governed in it by turns for forty years; and of whom no more is said, than that they were the first Irish princes who came out of Ulster, and divided the kingdom between them.

ACHY. II Having been killed as usual in battle by their
 AM3085 successor, of the Heberian line, whose name was
 EÓCHAD or ACHY FAOBARGLASS, he enjoyed the

the crown twenty years. His name is said to be given him from the green colour of his sword and javelins ; and he was the first Irish monarch who obliged the Picts that had settled themselves in the highlands and isles of Scotland beforementioned, to pay a tribute or homage to the crown of Ireland. He was much annoyed by the Princes of the Heremonian line ; who at length after five battles put an end to his life, and one of them obtained the crown for three and twenty years. At the end of that time, and after fighting four battles, an Heberian dispossessed and killed him ; and by a fatality common to the greatest part of them, the son of his predecessor, after allowing him to reign two and twenty years, possessed the throne in the same manner. The name of this Prince was AONGUS OLMUCHACH ; who acquired a great deal of military glory over the Picts in the islands and the north of Scotland, whom he reduced into subjection, and obliged them to pay a yearly tribute. After many triumphs over these people abroad, and some pirates and rebellious subjects at home, through a course of eighteen years, he fell in battle by the hands of his successor of the Heberian family, who reigned with great splendour four and twenty years. In order to excite and reward the courage of his soldiers, he caused silver shields and targets to be made, which he distributed without partiality or affection to the most valiant and deserving. But at last he shared the fate of his predecessors ; and in this manner they went on through five successive Monarchies, killing and being killed, till the reign of OLLAM FODLAH, without any thing more said of them but their names and genealogies ; except that one of them ordained, that the gentry should wear a chain of gold about their necks to distinguish them from the populace ; and that he gave hel-

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metes, with the collar and fore pieces of gold, as a reward to merit and experience ; and that another introduced the wearing of gold rings, which he bestowed upon the learned in arts and sciences.

It did not appear to me to be a matter of any moment, or entertainment to the reader, to give the names and families of these Princes, in order only to say that they reigned so many years, and then were killed. In the same manner I shall pass by all the rest in whose reign there was nothing memorable ; and who were so insignificant in themselves, as to have no more recorded of them in other histories, than that they reigned so many years, fought so many battles, and then died, or were killed. But here I must observe, that at the same time that this barrenness of facts makes the history dry and unentertaining, it yields a proof of its being genuine ; it demonstrates how scrupulous all succeeding historians were of adding any thing of their own, where so much room was left for invention and imposition : and though the care and accuracy of these people extended to little more than the succession and genealogies of their Kings, yet it evidently proves the use of letters among them from their first settlement in the island.

Indeed in such an early age of the world as we have gone through, and in a country divided into so many factions, in support of their several leaders of the line of HEBER, HEREMON, IR, and ITH, of all which families there have been Kings, little more could be recorded than how one of them obtained the sovereignty by the slaughter of another. It must be considered that history was then in its infancy ; and if a writer gave only a dry narration of facts, without explaining, or attempting to investigate, the causes of the great transactions they recite, it is all that could be expected. The province of history was then principally confined to short
meagre

meagre annals ; and it serves well enough the purposes of those who read it only for amusement ; “ just as they play a game at cards.” as Lord BOLINGBROKE says, “ or as they would read the story of the seven Champions.” If such is the history we have already gone through, or are yet to trace during the remainder of this age, to the age it must be attributed, and not to the nation, or the writer.

However this may be, the reign of OLLAM FODLA, which we are now to enter on, makes a remarkable epocha in the Irish history ; as he was a Prince who excelled greatly all his predecessors in wisdom and learning ; and who laid such a plan for the government and advantage of his people, as few legislators, it is said, exceeded, and few free nations had the happiness of enjoying. The reign of this Monarch, who was of the line of IR, which continued forty years, was distinguished as much by its peaceableness and public quiet, as by the many wise and useful laws which he established for the improvement of his people.

Whether the Israelites in their expedition under the conduct of MOSES out of Egypt, distinguished their tribes by banners, with certain devices or coats of arms distinctly blazoned upon them, as the Irish writers assert, I shall not take upon me to determine. But they tell us, that in imitation of this example, the great ancestor of the Milesians, when he led them out of Egypt, had the device of a dead serpent and the rod of MOSES painted on his banner : which still continued as an honourable distinction of their family till the present reign. Whatever there may be in this, it is certain that such devices among eminent people and nations were of great antiquity. The shield of ACHILLES mentioned by HOMER, the lion on the shields of

of ALEXANDER'S soldiers, and the images on the arms of many other heroes are a proof of this ; and there is nothing therefore unreasonable in supposing, that the Milesians might have a badge of distinction on their banners and helmets, in order to shew, and to perpetuate the memory of their descent ; as an illustrious family, who made a very early figure in the chronicles of the world.

But OLLAM FODLA considered, that as this general device on the banners of their army was an incentive to their troops to behave with the valour and intrepidity worthy of their great origine, so particular arms, distinguishing each family might also cause an emulation in the several commanders or at least be a security for their courage. He therefore ordered the Heralds, whom he then instituted, to assign a particular coat of arms to every Nobleman, and great officer, according to his merit and quality ; whereby each should be distinguished from all others of the same rank, and being curiously blazoned upon his banner, he should be known wherever he was ; in order particularly that he might be either rewarded for his courage, or punished for his cowardice in the field of battle. For they were always attended in their marches, as well as in the time of action, by their antiquaries and poets, who were obliged to take notice of the particular behaviour of every officer : and when they saw one distinguish himself against the enemy, his name and exploit was immediately entered into the records of his house, to be transmitted down from father to son ; and by that means to inspire the several branches of the family with an emulation to imitate such a great example. Nor was it recorded only in the private anecdotes of the family, but a copy of it was laid before the next assembly at Tara ; which was likewise instituted by this Monarch.

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There was great reason for saying that the reign of this Prince made a remarkable epocha in the Irish history. For there is in no nation a custom attended with circumstances of greater solemnity and magnificence, than was this triennial Parliament or convention ordained by OLLAM FODLA ; and of which the reader will excuse therefore a very minute recital. Though the form of their government was monarchical from the beginning, yet it was at all times under the restraint of popular councils. Indeed it was so much under that restraint, that, except in time of war, the real power of their first monarchs was too limited and circumscribed to answer the true ends of government ; which consist in restraining popular madness and insolence, without any invasion of popular rights. In order therefore to remedy an evil which was so threatening to the constitution, this monarch contrived a system, that the regal power, in case of necessity, might have some collateral authority to moderate the giddy excesses of the popular, and the popular some equal power to restrain the invasions of the regal. To bring this great end to bear, he instituted a new senatorial order in the state, of the Druids and men of learning ; who might throw their authority into the rising scale of government between the Princes and the people, and keep the balance even between these contending powers. Thus the Monarch and the provincial Kings who had the executive power in their hands on the one side, and the philosophers and priests, together with the deputies of the people on the other, formed the whole legislature.

This illustrious assembly was called by the name of *Fes Teambrack* ; and met by a royal summons in a Parliamentary manner once in three years, at the palace of Tara already mentioned. At this palace the

the Monarch of Ireland kept his court, as the place of his residence ; but there was also a house assigned for the King of every province in the island, and his retinue, during the sitting of the assembly. Besides these, there were three other houses built for the use of the public ; the first was a strong building in which were confined the prisoners of state ; in the second, the Judges, the Antiquaries, and the Bards assembled, to decide suits at law, impose fines and punishments upon delinquents, and to regulate and adjust the customs of the country. The third, which is said to have been a noble structure, was for the residence of the provincial Queens and their attendants during the Parliament, in which every Princess had a separate apartment magnificently fitted up ; and these courts, as we may well imagine, added much to the gaiety and splendour of the triennial meeting. Before the public business was entered upon, there was a magnificent entertainment for six days together, intended to promote mutual friendship and civility among the principal people of the country ; and where there had been any difference, to reconcile the parties. To this entertainment, not only the nobility and men of learning, but the principal commanders and officers of the army were admitted ; whose names and dates of their commissions were enrolled by the Antiquaries in the royal records, and who took their places according to their quality, their post, and merit, in the following manner.

A large apartment in the palace being fitted up for this purpose, with tables on each side and at the end, and proper spaces for the attendants, in order to prevent any disputes about precedence, the right hand table was allotted for the provincial Kings, the Princes, and principal gentry ; that on the left hand for the officers of the army, and men of lower fortunes ; and the other at the end, for the Druids,
Bards

Bards and men of learning of all professions. When the dinner was ready, and the room cleared of all the waiters, except the grand Marshall, the principal Herald, and a trumpeter, the last sounded his trumpet; at which all the shield-bearers of the Princes and nobility came to the door, and delivered the shields to the grand Marshall; who, by the direction of the Herald, hung them up in their proper places upon the wall on the right side of the long table, and which were distinguished by the coats of arms that were blazoned upon them. At the second blast of the trumpet, the target bearers of the officers of the army attended at the door; whose targets were delivered and hung up in the same manner on the inside of the other table. This ceremony being finished, the trumpet sounded a third time; on which the Kings, the Princes, the nobility, the gentry, the officers, and all the other members entered the room, and took their places under their own shields and targets, without the least confusion or disturbance.

The dinner being ended and every thing relating to it removed, the antiquities of the kingdom were brought before them and examined with the utmost accuracy, lest any falsehoods or interpolations should have been admitted. In this work, a committee of men of the greatest learning were employed; and where they found any misrepresentations, owing either to the ignorance or prejudice of the historians, they were expunged. Those accounts which remained after this inspection, and when they had undergone the approbation of the assembly, were ordered to be transcribed into the authentic chronicles of the kingdom, which were preserved in this palace; and the book wherein they were inserted was called the Register or Psalter of Tara: nor was any relation of antiquities or events, which was repugnant to those recorded in this register, to

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be deemed of any authority, or any other than a fabulous imposition. In the interval between the session of every such triennial meeting not only the professed antiquaries appointed by the state, but all other persons of learning were required to collect with diligence and fidelity whatever was worthy to be recorded in their several districts; that they might be laid before the next assembly, and if approved of, be transcribed into the public register, for the benefit and information of their descendants.

In this manner, it is said, that the ancient Irish preserved the anecdotes of every public transaction that was of importance enough to be delivered down to the world; and it was a care perhaps peculiar to these people. The authors who had the insolence to impose upon posterity, either by perverting matters of fact, or representing them in partial and improper colours, to the unmerited reproach of any character, were solemnly degraded from the honour of sitting in that assembly, and subject to such fines as should be adjudged equivalent to their delinquency. Thus thro' fear of disgrace and scandal, of losing their endowments and estates, or of suffering some corporal ignominious punishment, an historian of that age and nation was induced to relate nothing but truth; at least such an historian, as had the ambition of transmitting his writings to posterity, under the sanction and authority of this great assembly. Had no other historians presumed to relate the transactions of that country, the history of Ireland from this period must have been allowed to be the most authentic of any nation under the sun. But every family of rank and consequence retained a Bard to celebrate and record their actions; and these were doubtless not so scrupulous as the state historians employed and

and pensioned by the publick, and who were subject to the authority of the triennial meeting.

Besides the handsome revenues and estates which were assigned to Heralds, Physicians, Harp-players, and Bards, this Monarch ordained that none of these dignities should be conferred on any families that were not illustrious by their descent; and though they were hereditary, yet the eldest son should not succeed of course to the employment and the estate, unless he was also the most accomplished in his profession. As they lived thus without disturbance from worldly cares in the prosecution of their studies, so they were obliged to no dependence, nor service, but in the way of their profession. In the time of war, or of any other public calamity, they were bound to no military attendance nor contribution; their persons were inviolable; and whatever was the common distress, it was accounted sacrilege to seize upon their estates. To these noble encouragements, and the emulation resulting from them, which advanced all the branches of learning to the greatest height it was then capable of, it was probably owing, that Ireland afterwards became the centre of knowledge, and polite and liberal education, to the whole Western world.

The six days entertainment for the assembly being at an end, and the histories and records having been authenticated in the manner above-mentioned, the several orders of the legislature met in a parliamentary way. The Monarch sitting on the throne, and the Kings and provincial deputies surrounding it, the laws which had been established were then revised, and as the exigence of affairs required, were corrected or repealed; new laws which were thought necessary for the better government of the state were then enacted; offenders were punished according to their demerits; disputes between provinces

vinces were adjusted; and in short, whatever was was thought to redound to the honour or service of the whole island, as a common country, was ordained as a public law. Among others of that sort in this reign, besides those already mentioned, was one to make rapes capital without mercy; in which OLLAM FODLA gave up so much of his prerogative, as to put it out of his power either to pardon or reprieve the criminal: and in order to give the greater weight and dignity to this assembly which he instituted, he ordained that it should be death without redemption, by any means whatever, to strike or assault a member of this convention during the session, or to rob or disturb him by any violence. There are no records to direct us as to the order in which the regulations of this Parliament were voted, nor the time allotted for these debates: we may however conclude, with a late historian, "that in rude ages, when the science of government was extremely imperfect, among a martial people, unacquainted with the arts of peace, strangers to the talents which make a figure in debate, and despising them, Parliaments were not held in the same estimation as at present." Of this in Ireland, it is only said, that a throne was erected in the middle of a great room of state, on which the Monarch sat with his face towards the East; the King of Leinster opposite to him; the King of Munster on his left hand; the King of Ulster on his right; the King of Connaught behind the throne; and the principal Princes or nobility, ecclesiasticks, military officers, and deputies of each province, near the Kings they belonged to; that the convention was triennial and met about the beginning of our November; and that the whole assembly made a solemn and very splendid appearance. If the reader should be of opinion that I have been too prolix already in the account which has been given
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of this convention, it must be observed that it is an affair of as much importance as any in the whole Irish history, as being the fountain of all their civil polity in after ages; and with regard to the case of their records and public history, that it was worthy of imitation in the politest and most learned nations.

The great OLLAM FODLA, whose reign of forty years was so happy for his people and so glorious to himself, having finished it, not in the field of battle usual with his predecessors, but by a natural death, the crown devolved upon one of his sons. Though this prince enjoyed it in a peaceable manner twenty years, yet nothing more is transmitted of his reign, than that a great snow covered the whole country; and that he died in the same manner his father had done before him, and was succeeded by one of his brothers. The reign of this second son of OLLAM was distinguished by nothing but a very long season of uncommon health all over the island; and little more is said of him, than that he died in the seventeenth year of his monarchy, without any previous disorder or apparent symptoms of any disease. The third son who succeeded him, and reigned only twelve years, has nothing more related of him than that he was killed in battle by one of his nephews; who, in his turn, was slain by the son of his predecessor, after eight years possession of the crown. In this manner the monarchs of Ireland continued killing and succeeding one another, as before the reign of the good OLLAM, for the space of two hundred and sixty-three years more to the reign of KIMBATH, during all which time there were only three, out of one and thirty monarchs, who died a natural death. Neither was any thing memorable recorded in such a series of faction and civil war, except that a mint having been erected and money coined, and constant pay was then first

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settled upon the officers and soldiers of the standing army, for which a form of discipline was also established; and that a sort of skiffs or cock-boats were then invented, that were easy to manage, and covered with the skins of beasts; and which are to this day in use in some parts of the island under the name of Curraghs.

The reader will see by this, that the institution of OLLAM FODLA was of no long duration; and if it failed in the very family of him who formed it, there is no wonder that history should fail with it. For civil wars, among other evils, have not only an unhappy influence over the manners of a people, but are the bane of arts and sciences. Thus in fact, the history of Ireland became upon the extinction of the Ollam Fodlian constitution little more than a register of the succession and genealogies of their Kings, 'till the reign of KIMBATH; who by restoring the constitution of the whole kingdom to its pristine firmness, gave history and the sciences such new life and vigour as that, though they were suspended, they were never afterwards extinguished: and indeed from this monarch, the most knowing and impartial antiquarians date the certainty of their historical facts; as the Greeks do theirs from HERODOTUS. This great alteration in the state of public affairs will properly give a beginning to another book: and from a review of the various revolutions, vicissitudes, and tempests which we have passed through in this, I shall conclude it with an observation, which, though it may do no great honour to the ancestors of the Irish, yet may be of use to their posterity, which is the great end of history.

The observation I mean is this. We have seen in the course of this book, the Milesian race which is so much boasted of, though their country was separated from the rest of the world, and on all sides defended by seas and mountains as a bulwark, yet

yet far exceeding all other nations upon earth in the most unnatural, bloody, and destructive feuds, and their country obnoxious to more frequent and entire revolutions than any other. A review of these things will teach us, that if we expect any security from such calamities, it is necessary that we should cultivate moderation and humility in ourselves, and peace and union with one another. The people of Ireland, in those times of desolation, were wasted with factions and overrun with wickedness of every kind; and for these abominations it pleased God to withdraw his favour, and to give them over as a prey to be devoured of one another. Let us therefore take warning by their example; and whatever the pride of politicians, or the vain boast of those who delight in war may suggest, yet we have seen here enough to convince us, that a nation of libertines can never be the favourites of a righteous Providence, and unless the LORD shall direct them, that vain will be the councils, and unavailing will be the strength of man.

THE
HISTORY
OF
IRELAND.

BOOK III.

KIM-
BATH.

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WHATEVER uncertainties the best and most impartial Antiquarians have discovered, in the historical and chronological accounts of Ireland till the reign of KIMBATH, yet these are not so great, as what are to be met with in the Antiquities of Egypt, Chaldee, Greece, and other nations. Some characters of persons and things were found so deeply engraved, and so universally agreed about, though involved in fable or covered over with fiction, that there was no rejecting them, nor passing them by in silence: Nor indeed have the relations of many of the heroes of antiquity, which we entertain without scruple, any greater or fuller

fuller authority for their actions and existence. Amidst all the contentions and civil wars in Ireland, there was such a care and accuracy bestowed in the preservation of their regal genealogies and successions, as seems peculiar to these people; and which enabled succeeding writers to be tolerably exact in their calculations. Thus the generations of the Royal Milesian line, which were preserved by their Bards with few or no mistakes, being computed by the chronologers of this reign with the length of the reigns of the preceding Monarchs down to their own time, a wonderful consistency was found between those accounts and the course of nature. Upon this foundation they formed their technical chronology, which O FLAHERTY has proved, in his *Ogygia* to be the most exact at this day in the world. To the laborious researches of this learned and able writer, who has given a very accurate chronology of the Irish history, I own myself much indebted for this part of my work. But notwithstanding we are now arrived at the period of certainty in the annals of Ireland, yet still they are but annals. As letters were yet in their infancy, and the government unfixed and factious, the time of history was not come; and little more is to be expected, than a register of their Monarchs, and of the principal events which happened in every reign. With these therefore I shall proceed in the best manner I can, till we arrive at an age of more light and knowledge.

According to the records of this time, in which all their historians acquiesce, three of the Princes of Ulster the line of IR, after many struggles for the Monarchy, agreed at last that each of them should reign successively for one and twenty years, and then resign the government to the next in turn; and that two of them having enjoyed the crown according to this agreement, KIMBATH succeeded,

and reigned the time allotted him with splendour and tranquillity. They tell us that the first of the Kings who should then have assum'd the government, being dead without issue male, and having left a daughter, whose name was MACHA, of a robust constitution and an enterprising genius, she claimed the throne in right of her inheritance, before DIATHORBA, the other King, should succeed to it a second time. It is added, that the competitors having mustered up all the forces they could procure and engaging in a desperate battle, the Princess obtained the victory; her rival soon after died of grief; and to prevent KIMBATH from giving her any disturbance, that she married him. The reader will see of himself, without my pointing it out to him, that this agreement of the three Princes is not to be reconciled with probability and common sense; and it is astonishing how all their historians can deliver it down, as they do, without the least scruple or hesitation. If any agreement to the purpose mentioned subsisted at all, it must certainly be for one year instead of one and twenty; for what chance could the third, or even the second have for the throne, if each was to possess it one and twenty years? And if we suppose them to be no more than just of age when this agreement was made, which, considering their various contests they tell us of which were prior to it, is the least we can suppose, KIMBATH must then be considerably above fourscore when they marry him to the Queen.

But having said enough to shew the incredibility of this account, I must now observe, that the manuscript in my possession takes no sort of notice of this agreement, and says that MACHA who was a Princess of invincible spirit and intrepidity, being uneasy at DIATHORBA's ascending the throne at the death of her father, resolved, as she had no brother,

brother, to inherit it, and unusual as it was in Ireland for a female to hold the scepter, to raise an army and dispossess him. To this end she issued out a summons, and gave commissions, to the principal chiefs who were of her party, to raise all the troops they could; and tho' the Monarch and his five sons were supported by a numerous army well disciplined, that after a desperate engagement they were defeated, and the King himself was slain. Having thus fixed the crown upon her head as the first Queen of Ireland, and given peace to the country for some time, she married KIMBATH, a Prince of her own tribe; to whom she delivered up the command of the army, and with whom she shared the government during his life. There being nothing improbable in this relation, the reader will no doubt give it the preference to the printed histories; to which I shall now return. I shall omit however a strange absurd story which they tell, of a stratagem contrived and executed by the Queen, in order to get the sons of her rival into her power; and which I dare say the honest Bard who first related it, intended it only as a poetical fiction, to describe the spirit and resolution of this royal heroine.

Besides reviving the regulations of OLLAM FODLA, relating to the care of history and the government of the state, the Monarch KIMBATH had the glory of building the royal palace of Eamania, of settling the œconomy of his family province of Ulster, and of restoring the constitution of the whole kingdom. The palace has been already mentioned in the Introduction, and the councils held in it described; and therefore I shall say no more of it in this place, than that it continued almost seven hundred years, such an example of splendour, greatness, and regular œconomy—to use the writer's own words—as did the greatest honour to the

whole Milesian race. Another author assures us, that the ruins of that celebrated edifice, visible in his time, proclaimed the magnificence storied of it. There was not time for this monarch to carry any more great designs into execution; having enjoyed the crown only seven years, before death put an end to his life. The Queen held the reigns of government then in her own hands the same number of years; and though she ruled with a spirit and magnificence which made her the terror of her enemies and the delight of all her subjects, yet she was slain at last by her successor, of the line of HEBER; who at the end of nine years was taken off in his turn by HUGONY the Great, in revenge for the death of MACHA who had been his foster-mother.

HUGONY

HUGONY was a descendant of the Heremonian family, and had he died without issue, would have been the last and only person of that royal line. This prince who was married to a daughter of France, and wore the crown of Ireland thirty years, was one of the most spirited and enterprising monarchs that this island ever produced. He not only obliged the Picts to pay the tribute due to his predecessors the Kings of Ireland, but he also enlarged his dominions beyond the former bounds, extending his empire over all the Western isles of Europe. Not content with these foreign acquisitions, he abolished the Pentarchical government; and required all the Princes and Grandees of the provinces to bind themselves by a solemn oath to him and his posterity, in exclusion of the other lines of the Milesian race.

It is said in the history of this monarch, that he had five and twenty children, and yet left but two behind him; from whom sprung all the latter Heremonian line. In order to remedy some grievances, of which his sons, when they grew up, were the occasion, we are told that he divided the island into

into five and twenty parts, under this restriction, that every one of his Children should content themselves with the part allotted him ; and though it is added that the public taxes were collected for three hundred years according to this division, yet such a division seems too improbable in my opinion to be credited. It is certain however that he abolished the Pentarchical government by a law, and that he intended there should be no more provincial Kings : but whatever effect this law might have in the other provinces, the court of Eamania, headed by the Kings of Ulster, flourished with as great splendour as ever ; during the three hundred years from the abolition of the Pentarchy to its restoration. This great Monarch was slain at last by his brother, and his death revenged upon the murderer by one of his sons, who succeeded him in the throne 'till he was assassinated by his brother also in the following manner.

There being but two sons of HUGONY left behind him, as it has been said, the monarch was very kind and indulgent to his brother, and assigned him a princely revenue ; but COBTHACH being a man of boundless ambition could be satisfied with nothing less than the crown and kingdom. However having no prospect of accomplishing his desires, his brother having a son and grandson to inherit after him, he pined so much with grief and vexation, that he had so broke his constitution and impaired his health, as to be thought past all hopes of recovery. The King being informed of the ill state his brother was in, and having a great affection for him, made him a visit. But being attended with his household troops, he was asked the meaning of such a military retinue ; which the sick man seemed to resent, as though his fidelity was suspected. The King assured him with great courtesy and kindness, that he had not the least suspicion of his loyalty

LOGA-
RY I.

A.M 3649

loyalty or affection ; and that he was attended thus for no other reason than for the sake of state, and to preserve the dignity of his character : however not to make him uneasy with that circumstance any more, the Monarch added, that in his next visit he would come as a private gentleman without any guard at all : and then took his leave with great tenderness and compassion. The perfidious COB-THACH, says the history, thinking this to be a fair opening for the stroke he had long meditated or wished to strike, but not relying entirely on his own abilities in such an important enterprize, consulted a Druid whom he had in his train about the fittest means for accomplishing his purpose. The Druid having as much ambition and as little religion as his master, encouraged the project ; and after some consultation it was determined, that when the King came next to make a visit to him, the Prince should feign himself to be dead ; and being furnished with a poinard under his robe, as the King was lamenting over his body, which from his great affection to his brother they knew he would not fail to do, it would be very easy to stab him. The villainous scheme thus contrived, was accordingly put in execution and succeeded to their wish.

COB-
THACH.

A.M 3665

But it was not enough to assassinate the King in order to secure the crown, unless his son and grandson, who might disturb him in the possession, were likewise taken out of the way. There was no difficulty in procuring the former to be murdered, when he had deprived him of the royal power ; and there would have been less in killing the child, if his loss of speech and other infirmities, occasioned by a fright into which the usurper put him by his barbarities, had not caused his death to be thought unnecessary. The reader will excuse my stopping here to reflect on the dreadful consequence of a spirit of ambition, when it is suffered to riot in the human heart

heart without any controul. Here is the instance of a man, of good understanding and of high rank, giving way by little and little to the suggestions of this passion, 'till he was wholly within its power ; and for want of the means of its gratification, on the point of falling a sacrifice to it himself. But no sooner was there an appearance of an opportunity for indulging it, than we see this man extinguishing the sense of good and evil, implanted in the human breast, and having then divested himself of the strongest ties of gratitude and affection, contriving coolly and with deliberation to embrue his hands in the blood of his own brother, at the very time when that brother was giving an unfeign'd testimony of his love ; and all this complicated guilt being not sufficient to appease the dictates of his passion, we find him adding blood to blood, and one scene of cruelty to another, 'till he becomes a monster in nature, and notwithstanding his success, one who could not be looked upon without abhorrence. This instance will teach us, that it is necessary to our happiness as well as the great security of our virtue—if indeed they could be separated, as they cannot—to preserve the balance of power in the human system ; and that no passion should be permitted to exert itself improperly and exact more dominion, than God himself appointed when he gave them all a place in the breast of man. If this instance does no great honour to human nature, yet this reflection may do something towards mending the human mind ; which is the business of those who write, and those who study history.

The execrable COBTHACH having thus mounted the throne for which he had languished, possessed it amidst the disturbance and disaffection of his subjects for seventeen years ; when he was suddenly attacked from a quarter that he little thought of, and suffered the fate which he justly merited.

His

His brother, as it hath been said, having left a grandson about ten years old, whom the usurper intended likewise to destroy, if the barbarities which he first inflicted upon him, by throwing him into convulsions and depriving him of his speech, had not made his destruction seem unnecessary, this young prince was conveyed away to the west of Munster by his friends ; as one whom Providence had reserved to be the proper executioner of this bloody tyrant. It must be owned indeed that the ways of Providence are dark and intricate ; and whilst the revolutions of states and kingdoms amaze and confound us, the springs by which they are moved are often secret and imperceptible. But that men should not mistake and challenge that to themselves, which the councils of the most High only form, and his power only can accomplish, he hath thought fit to let us know, that it is He who ruleth over the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whomsoever he pleases. Thus the marks of his almighty wisdom are so visible in the revolutions of some states and nations, that if the eyes of men were not blinded by pride and unbelief, they could not possibly be mistaken in the hand which guides them.

Of this sort was the surprizing turn of affairs brought about by Providence in the event before us. The child who was thought incapable of giving the least disturbance to the usurper, and whose life was spared for that reason only, after being entertained for some time by a friend of his family, the King of Munster, was for very prudential reasons conveyed to the court of France ; of which his great grandmother, as the reader may remember, was a descendent. Nine of his friends are said to accompany him in this expedition ; who discovering to the French Monarch the circumstances of his birth, and his present miserable situation, the King was so much moved with his misfortunes, that he
not

not only gave him an honourable reception, but also distinguished him with a military command. The use of his speech and all his other faculties having been long restored to him, the Prince shewed himself worthy of the commission he had been honoured with, and of the ancestors from whom he descended. The King his relation, gave him the command of the French army, in which he signalized himself so much by his courage and good conduct, that his fame was spread abroad into the most distant countries, and of course among the Irish; many of whom resorted to him to avoid the tyranny of the usurper.

Here I must leave the fair track of sound and real history, and deviate for a while into the flowery path of, what I take to be Poetical fiction; whither the reader may follow me, or not, as he is most inclined. The King of Munster, who had concealed and entertained our hero in his youth, had a daughter whose name was MORIAT; and the children being much of the same age, they became play fellows, and contracted a mutual liking and affection for each other. When the fame of his great exploits was carried into Ireland and had reached her ears, the innocent tenderness she had entertained for MAON in the days of their youth and play, returned strong upon her, and possessed her soul. The ripeness which nature had given to her affections improved this tenderness into a love, against which it was not in her power to make resistance; and perhaps she would not resist it if she could. Never was the name of prince MAON mentioned with any honour, but the breast of the lovely MORIAT throbbed with an emotion that she could not suppress; and her cheeks glowed with a flame they were not accustomed to. This situation was too uneasy to be long endured without some redress; but the difficulty was how to procure it. She was a young lady in the court of her father the King of Munster,

Munster, and the Prince was at the head of the army in France: if it appeared impracticable for her, to steal away and ramble thither incognito in order to throw herself in his way, it seemed no less improbable, that MAHON should leave his power and grandeur acquired in France, to come to Ireland as a private gentleman; and yet, without their meeting together, it was certain that her uneasiness was without a remedy. In the agony of mind arising from this perplexity, and which I apprehend is much more clearly conceived than well expressed, —as being perhaps the only agony attended with any pleasure—she fell at last upon an expedient which seemed to promise success.

The passion of love is not only very fruitful of invention, but also exercises talents, if it does not give them, which would never have been thought of without it; and especially the talent of versification. Thus whether this young Princess ever invoked the Muses before or no, she now composed a poem in praise of the heroic actions of MAON; and having procured a celebrated musician to set and sing it to the harp, she prevailed upon him to go to France, and carry a letter, and a present of jewels, from her to the general. The contents of the letter are to be guessed at; but no sooner had the bearer got access, delivered his credentials, and sung the poetry which accompanied them to the harp, than MAON was inspired with the resolution of prosecuting his claim to the crown of Ireland. He had to good an interest in the King of France to make any doubt of his assistance in the recovery of his right, and therefore communicated his design to him without any delay. The King being convinced of the justice of his pretensions, granted him an aid of two thousand two hundred men, and a proper fleet to transport them. With these forces and with the aid of the Irish gentry who had fled into France for his protection, the
Prince

Prince arrived in the harbour of Wexford; and there receiving intelligence of the place of residence of the usurper, he directed his march directly thither. The secrecy and the expedition with which this march was conducted, gave no time to the Irish monarch, either to put himself in a posture of defence, or to escape his enemy by flight. Taken therefore by this surprize, he was killed by the Prince in his own court; and all his favourites and attendants perished with him.

It is not from any great improbability in the circumstances of this story, that I have given it the name of a poetical fiction: but knowing how apt they were in those days to enliven the records which were in verse, with some touches that might give delight and wonder, which are the soul of poetry, I suspect this to be more of novel than history. It must be owned however that the event does not seem to require so remarkable an interposition to bring it about; nor is there any absurdity in supposing, that his own situation of power and skill in arms, the hatred amidst which his rival possessed the throne, and the suggestions of the Irish who lived in exile with him, might any of them be sufficient to instigate a valiant and youthful Prince to vindicate his right. Nay it seems to me a little absurd, that none of these things should move him, till he was called upon by the voice of love, to ascend the throne of his forefathers, of which he had been deprived by a tyrant and assassin. But after all, it matters little, whether we suppose it to be real or fictitious history; because if only the latter, it serves to take the mind off from a scene of horror, and to give it a cast of pleasantry in its stead: and therefore does not improperly fill a place in grave historic pages, such as these. Be all this at it may — When MAON, who was afterwards called LABKA LONGSACH, had destroyed the usurper, and fixed

LABRA.

A.M 3682

éd himself in the peaceable possession of the government, he made addresses to MORIAT the Princess of Munster, with whom he had lived for some time in his youth; and who according to the foregoing story had generously made him an offer of her love, and first inspired him with a resolution to attempt the inheritance of the crown. This offer was too agreeable to the father as well as the daughter to be refused; and the treaty was concluded by a solemn marriage quickly after.

Whatever we may determine as to the love tale that has been related, whether a real fact, or a fictitious embellishment of MAON's return to Ireland to assert his right, there can be no doubt as to a fable which is to be met with in the Irish manuscripts relating to this reign, which I come now to recite. But I must first beg leave to observe, that fables of this nature are so far from being a mark of forged or false history—as We in this country have been always apt to consider it with regard to Ireland—that they are on the other hand, an irrefragable proof of its high antiquity, and of the very early use of letters in that nation. For besides that fables are not mere fictions as the learned know, it is certain that they were in use in the primitive times, and in no other; and all of them almost had some relation to history, or were connected with events of undoubted authenticity. The fable relating to LABRA LONGSEACH is as follows. The ears of this monarch being so immoderately long as to resemble the ears of a horse, in order to conceal this deformity from the knowledge of his subjects and to preserve him from their contempt, whenever it was necessary to cut his hair, which was generally once a year, the operator was always instantly put to death. Instead therefore of an emulation for an employment that was about the person of the King, it became in a few years avoided as much as possible,

ble, and the hair cutter was obliged to be determined by lot.

It happened once that this lot fell upon a deserving young man, the son of a poor widow who had no other child. The mother apprehending the death of her son according to custom, was overwhelmed with grief; and finding no other remedy she applied herself to the King, and intreated his mercy to spare the life of her only child upon whom her all depended. The King being moved with her great affliction, and thinking it unreasonable to order a new decision, consented to spare his life; but on this express condition, that the hair cutter should never divulge a secret that would be committed to him, nor reveal any particular circumstance that he should observe. The widow thought these terms were very favourable; and the artist joyfully consenting to them, the King's hair was cut: but when his long ears were discovered, the secret which the operator had promised to conceal on pain of death became visible to him, and though he was much surprized at the sight yet he took no notice. The burden however of so great a secret was too heavy for him; and what between the extreme desire he had to disclose it, and the fear of being put to death if he did, the poor man languished and pined so much, that his life was in danger even from thence. The widow seeing her son in this miserable condition, applied to a neighbouring Druid, eminent for his skill in physick, for some advice; who soon discovered, when he saw the patient, that his illness did not proceed from any disease. The young man being therefore examined by the Druid, confessed that the art of physick was ineffectual in his case, which required only to be disburthened of an important secret, which then oppressed him: but as death was to be the consequence of such a discovery, the remedy was full as bad as the disease; and

the apprehension of death in either way—for concealing it would kill him—was the sole occasion of his present malady.

When the Druid had revolved these circumstances in his mind, he contrived a method by way of remedy between the two extremes, which might produce the desired effect. Observing then to the young man, that though he was under an obligation not to reveal the secret entrusted with him to any one living, yet that this did not prevent his divulging it to the air or things inanimate, he advised him to go to a neighbouring wood; and when he came to a cross way that he would find in it, to turn to the right hand, and the first tree he came to, putting his lips close to it, to whisper the secret. The patient was rejoiced with such an easy remedy; and immediately pursuing the Druid's advice, he delivered himself of the burden which he had so long laboured with to a willow tree, and found immediate ease. Soon after this it happened, that the harp of the King's musician being broken, and the artist coming to this wood to furnish himself with another, accidentally fell'd the tree to which the important secret had been disclosed. When a harp was fashioned from it, and strung and put into order, the musician, to his great amazement, could not possibly give it any other sound than that "**LARRA LONGSEACH** has the two ears of a horse." The fame of this wonderful instrument being immediately spread abroad, the King ordered several musicians to touch it, but none of them could give it any other expression. His Majesty was so much astonished at this miracle, that he was persuaded the Gods had ordered it in resentment of his cruelty in putting so many people to death, in order only to conceal a deformity from his subjects; and this conviction made him relent of his barbarity, and
 expose

expose his long ears during the remainder of his life.

The reader has now before him the whole fable, as it is given in the Irish histories from some of their most antient and authentic manuscripts. As there is no doubt but it has a reference to a very remarkable transaction in the reign of LABRA, so at this distance of time, and for want of knowing more particulars of his history than are handed down to us, it is impossible to give a thorough explication of it in all parts, and to shew every thing which lies hid under this disguise. For it has been proved by the Abbe BANIER,§ in his *Mythology and fables of the ancients*, that as every nation had fictions of its own, which were the productions of human fancy, that had always a bias towards the marvellous, so they contain a part of the history of primitive times in every nation; and that neither the allegory nor moral were the primary intention of those who invented them. In this case however, it being in vain for us to look for the former, for the reasons just now mentioned, we must content ourselves with the latter. As the learned are not agreed, whether ascribing asses ears to MIDAS, was on account of his stupidity, or his exquisite sense of hearing, or because he kept spies through all his dominions and therefore heard at a great distance, so I shall not presume to assign a reason, why the Irish Monarch was complimented with the ears of a horse. The circumstances of the two fables are very similar; and as all authors are agreed, that the fable relating to the Phrygian king is founded upon history, it must be extreme prejudice or weakness not to conclude so of the other. In point of ornament it must be allowed, that the Irish fable has the superiority: it has more incidents to interest and catch the attention of the reader; and the marvellous part, which is to surprise, surprises us more agree-

ably. The whole fable of the ears of MIDAS, it is well known, is that he took care to conceal under a Phrygian bonnet this dishonourable deformity ; and his barber who had discovered it, but durst not speak of it, imparted the secret to the earth whence reeds sprung up which spread it abroad. Whatever might be the particular history on which both the fables were founded, it is no difficult matter to find out their moral. Our business is only with that, which relates to LABRA LONGSEACH ; and as it has more incidents in it so the moral is more extensive than the other. It not only teaches us, that as deformity in persons of the most illustrious rank is obnoxious to the contempt and ridicule of the multitude, though very unreasonably, so it is always concealed as much as possible ; but we may learn also from it, that an important secret entrusted to people of low and little minds is too powerful a temptation to be resisted ; and when it has once escaped the breast, though where we believed it may be confined with the utmost safety, it is divulged abroad in a manner that we little thought of. This is the lesson to be drawn from the foregoing fable ; and if it teaches us nothing more, yet I presume it will be allowed, that it was not unworthy of a place in such a work as this. But I shall now return to the history.

Nothing more is related of this valiant and able Monarch, than that after a prudent reign of fourteen years he fell by the sword of a son of his predecessor. Indeed from this time, through a series of above two hundred and twenty years, we find almost nothing recorded but the succession and genealogies of their Kings ; two of which only died a natural death, and all the others, as usual, killing their predecessors, and being slain by those that succeeded them.

However

However that I may not omit the little that is handed down, I must inform the reader, that one of these Monarchs of the Heremonian line, descended from HUGONY, whose name was **ANGUS TURMY**, and who reigned above thirty years with great lustre, when he was overcome once with wine, committed incest with his daughter; which occasioned in him so much shame and remorse, that he could never afterwards bear to be seen in publick. But if the whole account we have of him is true, he added a deliberate act of wickedness in his sober senses, which had not surprize and incapacity to palliate or excuse it. The fact I allude to was this: A son being born to him as the fruit of his incestuous commerce, he ordered him to be put in a boat furnished with mantles and jewels suitable to his extraction, and sufficient to defray the expence of his maintenance and education, if he should find more mercy from providence than his unnatural parent had shewn him; and the boat to be put to sea. It happened however that it was soon discovered by some fishermen; who taking out the infant with what belonged to it, became its fosterers, giving him the name of **FIACHA FERMARA**, that is the seaman: and from the posterity of this child, thus exposed to almost certain destruction either by famine or the waters—so amazing and powerful are the works of providence—came the royal line of Scotland: the progenitors on the British side of our own illustrious Monarch.

ANGUS II.
A.M. 3786

The son of this **FIACHA** lived in the province of Ulster; where by his own virtues, and the extensive power of his family, he obtained a considerable settlement: and **DEGAD** his grandson was so much the object of jealousy to the Irian race, to whom that province had belonged from the invasion of the Milesians to this time, that nothing less than his expulsion would content them. He was a prince

of the greatest abilities of the age he lived in ; and he was so far from losing any thing by this opposition, that the malice of his enemies, as it often happens, served him more than their friendship. He retired into Munster to the protection of DUACH then King of Ireland, and who had formerly been his pupil. No reception, it is said, was ever more noble. So greatly was the Monarch affected with the misfortunes, and so charmed with the ability and conversation of his guest, once the guardian of his youth, that he heaped honours on him without measure. In short he made him so much his friend and confident in all the private and political affairs of his life, that his name in history is never mentioned without the addition of DALTA DEGAD, that is, the foster father of DEGAD. It was not long after he had procured for him a considerable territory in Munster, that DUACH himself was slain ; but he left DEGAD possessed so much of the affections of the people of that province, that by an extraordinary act which contravened the Hugonian law, they elected him King of both the Munsters ; an honour which no one Prince, even of the Heberian line, had ever before enjoyed. The family of this Prince became so popular, on the score of their prudence, justice and oeconomy, that they flourished with the greatest splendour in that province ; and in the sequel we shall find them arriving at the highest honours, in filling the Monarchy of Scotland as well as Ireland.

ACHYIII. The course of the history has brought us now
 ————— to the reign of ACHY FEYLOCH ; who restored the
 A.M3922 Pentarchical government that was abolished by HUGONY, as it has been related, three hundred years before. But though he restored the government of the Provinces by Kings, yet he did not restore the constitution in their election, but appointed them himself ; and at first he divided Connaught into three

three parts or portions. Two however of the petty princes whom he had fixed there, refusing soon after to permit him to erect a royal palace for his residence in their territories, and the third making him an offer of any part of the country allotted for his share, the Monarch was so pleased with his complaisance, that he gave him his daughter MEABA, a beautiful lady, in marriage; and as he became further acquainted with the Prince's accomplishments, he admitted him into his councils, and advanced him to the office of prime minister. Nor was this all the favour which the King conferred upon him. The two other Princes that had refused him a palace having thus disobliged him, he gave to TINNE his son in law the sovereignty of the whole province of Connaught; who soon slew one, and dispossessed the other rival. The peace and government of the province being thus established, a royal palace was built according to the King's intention, called Ruth Cruachain; where the public councils were held for the better regulation of the police of the island, in the same manner as at Eamania. The King of Connaught having reigned over that province for several years with great prudence and reputation, MEABA his Queen succeeded him in that command; and continuing a widow for ten years, married then to OILILI MORE of a noble house in Leinster, by whom she had seven sons. If the historians are to be credited she lived eighty years with this husband, and eight years more a widow after his death; during which time she was got with child by FERGUS a chief of the province of Ulster, and had three boys at a birth, from whom many families of great distinction derived their origin.

Notwithstanding this is delivered for true history by KEATING, yet the reader will discern, without my assistance, that it must be a great mistake.

For as we are told that she was married first to TINNE who lived many years, that she was a widow ten years before she took OILILI for her husband with whom she lived eighty years, and that in her second widowhood she was got with child by FERGUS, it will appear that she must have been, at the lowest computation, above a hundred years of age. This is not only a little of the latest for such a frolick and such fruitfulness, but it is also repugnant to another part of the history ; in which we are told by the same writer, that FERGUS was killed by the order of OILILI in a fit of jealousy. The story indeed is somewhat odd, but it is much more worthy of credit, than that MEABA should play the strumpet, and bring forth three boys at a birth, when she was above a hundred and twenty years of age. But her cohabitation with OILILI for eighty years, is an evident anachronism with other events that are recorded ; and it is not unlikely that FERGUS's familiarity with her was when her husband advanced in years : and so indeed my manuscript has it. However according to O FLAHERTY, she stipulated with OILILI before marriage, that he should not be jealous but bear it without any concern, if on account of her former continence in her widowhood, she should at any time take the liberty to violate his bed ; and therefore openly admitted FERGUS to it. But not to dwell any longer upon this circumstance, which scarce admits of one's being serious, it must be observed that the time in which this princess lived, was distinguished with as many valiant and heroic actions as are to be found in any period of the Irish history.

To give a particular account of all the military exploits and achievements of the champions of those times, it is said, would require volumes ; and they may be seen by those who understand the language, in many manuscripts of authenticity which
are

are still preserved. Indeed to confess the truth, I think it would be too great a trespass on the time and patience of the reader, if I was to transfer into this work all the relations that are handed down of these distinguished heroes; whose fame for the most part is alive among the Irish at this day. It may be thought however perhaps not impartial to pass them all over in silence; and that a great deal of the glory of their ancient history will be diminished by such a neglect. That I may avoid this censure, which would hurt me more than to be thought injudicious, I shall proceed with those accounts which are more immediately connected with the transactions of this reign; tho' most of them are embellished with such poetical fictions of probability, as make it very difficult as well to disentangle them so as to relate nothing but truth, as to determine what to relate, and what to pass over in silence.

At the time when MEABA was Queen of Connaught, CONNOR the son of NESSA, distinguished always by that title, who was King of Ulster, tho' said by the Irish writers to be "one of the wisest and worthiest Princes that Ireland ever produced," was yet guilty of the most flagrant act of treachery and breach of faith that was ever recorded in any history. Some of the chiefs of his province, who had been securities for his honour, were so incensed at his perfidy, that they took up arms against him, and advanced towards his palace of Eamania in order to give him battle. The King opposed them with all the forces he could get together; but being defeated with great loss was obliged to save himself by a retreat. The victors, in consequence of their success, plundered the palace, and put all they met to the sword; without even sparing the ladies of the Seraglio whom CONNOR kept for his own pleasure. When they had sated their fury, and considered coolly of what they had done, they were easily convinced

vinced that the King would soon be in a condition to revenge himself very powerfully; and therefore they marched away into the province of Connaught, and put themselves under the protection of Queen MEABA. The Queen received them very kindly; but not content with their situation, and though they had no quarrel against any but the King himself, yet they frequently sent strong detachments by night to burn and ravage the country: and indeed they harassed it with such hostilities, that the inhabitants, and the fruits, and provisions of the whole province, were in a manner destroyed by fire and sword. These incursions, which were seconded by the men of Connaught for the sake of the plunder, produced a war between the provinces, which lasted with different success, and with some intermissions, for seven years. The Reader will not expect an account of the miseries which these commotions were attended with, though many volumes, it is said, have been written of them.

It must be confessed, that this was a period of great military renown in the Irish history. For here were three principal tribes or orders of knights at that time, who were not only accounted the greatest men of the age by their own provinces, but were so confessed by all the nations of the western world. We are told that their valour, their strength, and the largeness of their stature, were the wonder of foreign countries; and that their exploits are not to be paralleled in history. The first tribe of these warriors was called the Knights of the Red Branch, and were under the command of CONNOR King of Ulster. The second order belonged to the province of Connaught, under the conduct of OILILL FINN, the principal general of Queen MEABA. The third consisted of a family of hereditary courage, descended from DEGAD abovementioned, under the command of CONRY the son of DAIRE, who had

had their residence in Munster. It was one of the principal customs of the ancient Irish to train up their youth to a military life ; that they might either defend their country in a time of distress, or become formidable abroad : and in order to excite their valour, and to inspire them with heroic and warlike sentiments, it was established as a rule, that whoever came off the victor in single combat, should be distinguished with the spoils of the vanquished, as a trophy and a testimony of his bravery. Among other trophies of this kind, it was usual to take out the brains of the adversary who had been killed ; and by mixing them with lime, and with the blood, and drying them in the sun, they became as hard as stone. These were always produced at public meetings and conventions, as an honourable distinction of the person to whom they belonged, and as a proof of his valour and certain victory. Adjoining to the royal palace of Eamania where the Kings of Ulster kept their court, there was a lodge appropriated to the tribe of the Red Branch ; where the champions of that order deposited their arms, and the honourable spoils they had taken in battle from their enemies.

A ball of the Brains of MESGEDRA, a celebrated soldier killed by one of these champions in a trial of skill, was laid up in this house of arms ; not only to secure it as a noble badge to the conqueror, but against the fatal effects of a prediction, that it would some time or other revenge upon the men of Ulster, the indignities which the great warrior, whose brains they were, had suffered from them. These sort of predictions were very frequent among their Druids ; and in that age of ignorance and superstition were much regarded. Notwithstanding all their care to preserve a ball which was to have such terrible consequences in the province, there being at that time two fools in the court of CONNOR who had

had seen it, and liking it for a plaything, they stole it undiscovered ; and going to some distance from the palace, tossed it about from one to the other as a common ball. At this time it happened, as the historians tell us, that CEAT a champion of the second order belonging to the province of Connaught, passing by, spied the fools at their diversion ; and immediately discovering it to be a ball of brains, he found means to get it from them, and carried it home to his own province. Upon a consultation with some of his own people about this military trophy, it was conjectured that these were once the brains of the great MESGEDRA ; and the prophecy relating to them being well known and as well confided in, the champion who had obtained it of the fools always wore it about him, that he might be able to fulfill the prediction. In those days the sling was an instrument of war in great use ; and many were as expert in the exercise of it at hitting a mark, as we are now with a musket. I have already mentioned the frequent hostilities between the two provinces of Ulster and Connaught ; and therefore it was not long before CEAT had an opportunity to make trial of the effects of this new weapon.

The forces on both sides were drawn out for a decisive battle, in order to put an end to the mutual depredations which destroyed the provinces. But as the Connaught general was apprehensive that his army was not a match for that of CONNOR, he contrived a stratagem to destroy him without fighting. Many of the principal ladies of Connaught being at that time on the top of a hill, in order to view the two armies and wait the event of the battle, they were requested to send a messenger to the King, as having something of great importance to say to him ; and who had no danger to apprehend from any of them. The King being a man of gallantry, and seeing nobody but women,
fell

fell into the snare. But though he trusted to the honour of the ladies and went up to them without attendants, yet he soon found that they had deceived him ; and perceiving CEAT in their company, he retreated towards his forces faster than he came. The champion had got the ball of brains ready in his sling to discharge at the King of Ulster ; and when he saw his treachery was detected by CONNOR's flight, he pursued him till he came near enough to take his aim and discharge his ball ; which hitting the King's head made a terrible fracture, just as some of his guards, who had seen him pursued, were coming up to his relief ; from whom it was with difficulty that CEAT escaped by flight. This stratagem carries with it so severe a reflection on the honour of the Connaught ladies as well as of this famous warrior, that it secures it from the suspicion, which I must own I should otherwise entertain, of its being a fiction of the bard to embellish his history. But I shall leave the reader to his own judgment of the matter,

The ball having made a fracture of a very dangerous consequence, and rendered the King senseless, his surgeon required the consent of the great officers who were attending him, to the operation that he thought necessary to preserve his majesty's life ; because it was possible he might die under his hands. One would imagine from this circumstance, that the use of the trephine was then known in surgery ; but however this might be, the officers considering that a desperate case requires a desperate remedy, and that the peace and happiness of the province depended on the life of CONNOR, they consented to his proposal. The care and skill of the surgeon in a short time restored the King to his speech and senses ; and though the fracture was cured in a great degree, yet the wound had had that effect upon the brain, as, upon any violent passion

passion or heat of spirits, it would be in danger of breaking out again ; and a relapse might be attended with very fatal consequences. Therefore the surgeon very honestly and very wisely advised his Majesty to avoid all immoderate exercises that might put his blood into a ferment ; particularly not to ride hard, and to be in any respect incontinent, but to keep himself always temperate and cool. The King had understanding enough to see the propriety and importance of this advice, and prudence enough for seven years to follow it. Though the artifice by which he received this fatal wound does no honour to those who contrived or assisted in it, as I have said, yet it must be owned that the notorious perfidy which this King was guilty of, in ordering three chiefs to be assassinated, to whom he had given hostages and safe conduct, made his own fate through treachery to be less lamented. It gave a fair opening to weak and superstitious people, to account it to be a just and public judgment from heaven as a punishment for that perfidy : but among those who believe another state of retribution, it is very rash and inconsiderate, if no worse, to make free in this manner with the ways of Providence. Notwithstanding the temptation which direct and apparent circumstances may carry in them to influence our judgment of such events, yet it is safest and best, to leave them all to Him, who does whatever pleases him among the inhabitants of the earth.

The Philolophers, whom they called the Fileahs and were likewise their Bards and Poets, having engrossed the learning and corrupted the law of the country, and the good which society had a right to from both being thus defeated, the popular fury at length was raised, and poured down upon them like a torrent. In this, as in most similar cases, violence knew no bounds ; but good and bad were swept

swept before it without any discrimination. The abuse of things being confounded with the just and temperate use of them, the people of Leinster and both the Munsters, in the height of their rage would hear of no accommodation : All salutary reformati-
ons were proposed in vain ; and nothing but the banishment of all the Fileahs, an order without which the state could not subsist, would appease their resentment. “ Indeed the considerations which regulate popular opinions are seldom free from interest or passion ; and never, or almost never, reach farther than the present time. Those among them who judge best are themselves deceived by their own sense of interest ; and seem one by one to have determined, though they will not confess, and perhaps do not know it, to procure their own satisfaction without any care about the public, or the future.” The reader is obliged for this observation to the Duke de SULLY, who saw it verified in his time in France : it was verified in the event we are relating in the Irish history many ages ago ; and I wish I could not add, that it is almost every day verifying in the country in which I write. If this shews us that human nature has been the same in all ages since the creation of the world, which every body seems to know, it will also shew us another thing, which nobody seems to know, that the voice of the people is not the voice of God, but for the most part the voice of delusion ; which is prompted by those who have interests or passions of their own to gratify. This was exactly the case at that time in Ireland. Because most of the Fileahs in their judicial capacity, had invaded private property instead of protecting it by law, therefore the whole order, good and bad, were to be extirpated ; that some might fill the places from which those were to be dismissed, and others might gratify their revenge for private and personal injuries.

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In this distress the Fileahs found no protection but in the court of CONNOR the King of Ulster ; who is eminently distinguished in the ancient records of Ireland as a very able and accomplished Prince. His understanding however was too good to be imposed upon with the sounds and shadows of patriotism, or to be run away with by popular clamour ; and wisely considering the danger with which so desperate a cure was attended, he attempted, and at last effected a reformation to the satisfaction of the whole island. However corrupt the Fileahs in general might have been, yet even at this time there were men of great integrity and capacity of their number ; and it would have been very wonderful if there had not. For as every bard of the first order retained as a mark of distinction thirty others of lower rank as his attendants, and every second bard retained fifteen, the whole body amounted to near a thousand. They were not only the lawyers of the people, but their poets, philosophers, and historians. In this disgrace, the best and wisest amongst them had recourse to the King of Ulster, as a patron of the learned, and a particular friend to their profession. Some of these were the descendents of the celebrated DEGAD before-mentioned ; whom CONNOR employed in reducing the whole body of the laws to intelligible and simple rules ; and in giving such determination in all possible cases as enabled every man of common sense and learning to be a tolerable judge of his own. By these prudent regulations, and by the interposition of the King of Ulster, the lawyers were admitted again into credit, upon trial for seven years ; and from the terror of their late intended expulsion they were easily induced to practise on the principles of their original institution. The laws being at this time reduced into axioms, which were thought to be compiled with so much wisdom and equity

as to receive the approbation of heaven, acquired the name of "Celestial Judgments;" and for many succeeding ages no nation was happier in the compiling or execution of laws than this.

The Queen of Connaught; having countenanced and assisted the men of Ulster in their incursions, became an object of resentment at the court of CONNOR. Not content however with carrying hostilities into her province, and opposing her armies in the field of battle, a son of the King of Ulster, and of a mean ignoble ungenerous disposition, forgetting what was due to his royal birth, what was due to the hero, and even what manhood required of him, degraded himself so low as to become the assassin of an old helpless woman. This great Queen, it seems, took much delight in swimming; and her palace being situated on the banks of a fine lake, she used to retire thither in the summer mornings to refresh and divert herself with bathing. A custom of this kind could not be kept a secret; and it being known among others to the Prince of Ulster, he contrived a scheme for her destruction. But not being then expert enough in the art of slinging, he measured with a line the exact distance from one side of the lake to the other, and returned home undiscovered. Being thus master of the breadth of the lake where the Queen entered, he set up two stakes at the same distance from each other; and placing an apple on the top of one them, and standing at the other, he practised throwing a stone at it with a sling so long as to be able always to hit the mark. Having arrived at this dexterity, his next business was to procure an opportunity of using it against the Queen, which soon presented itself.

A conference having been agreed upon between the provinces, in order to accommodate some of their differences, at which this Prince was to assist on

the part of Ulster ; and the place of meeting being appointed, probably by his contrivance, near the lake above-mentioned, he took his stand one morning unperceived ; and as MEABA entered the water, he struck her full in the forehead with a stone from his sling, which stunned, and sunk her instantly to the bottom. After such an ignominious insidious manner died this great heroic Queen, far advanced in years, by the base and cowardly hand of a young prince. She had had her failings, it must be owned ; but they were failings that entitled her to the protection of a man of gallantry, instead of making her obnoxious to such a hellish rage ; and separate from those failings, she displayed accomplishments and virtues, which equal her to the greatest heroines of antiquity. If it was proper to acquaint the reader of the death of this illustrious Queen, who had made so great a figure on the public stage, on account of her valour, her gaiety, her generosity, and manly sense, it seemed necessary to relate the particular circumstances attending it ; in order to shew to what lengths of meanness, infamy, and wickedness, political resentments alone will carry men of the highest rank and education, when they are not under the controul of good sense and virtue.

Whatever were the great accomplishments and the merit of CONNOR King of Ulster, and which have distinguished his name in all the ancient records of the kingdom, yet he was far from being a happy man either in his family or himself. One of his sons, as we have seen, divested himself of all sense of glory and of goodness, and took great pains for many days in order to qualify himself to be the cowardly murderer of his own aunt, just dropping into her grave, who had been a Queen of great renown. One of his daughters was so much beloved by the King of Leinster, that instead of
requiring

requiring any dower with her, he made over a considerable part of his own dominions to her father in order to obtain her in marriage. But the lady, tho' she consented to this aggrandizement of her family, and gave her hand to the Prince who was so much enamoured of her, yet had very little regard to her own honour, and her husband's happiness: for in a short time after her marriage, she went off with a gallant, an officer in her father's army, to whom she had before given her heart. As to CONNOR himself, to say nothing of the breach of faith above-mentioned, he tarnished all his glory in a fit of drunkenness, by committing incest with his mother, whom he got with child. Though he observed the surgeon's directions for seven years after the fracture of his skull, yet at the end of that term, having suffered the passion of anger on some occasion to get the better of him, his blood and spirits were thrown into such a disorder, that the wound bursting out with some of his brains he died upon the spot.

The ancient histories of this island abound with relations of the military exploits of the heroes and champions of this age, and particularly of the famous CUCULLING, so much celebrated in the poem referred to in the introduction. But as there have been so many testimonies already of the fierce and warlike genius of these people, and as their stories have little or no connexion with the transactions of the times, they appeared to be rather improper for such a work as this. If during the great commotions between the provinces of Connaught and Ulster, the reader has heard nothing of the King of Ireland, though they were commotions which lasted, with some intermission, for seven years, and were attended with

fatal consequences to both, this neutrality of the Monarch is to be accounted for, not only from the cause of the quarrel, but from his own turn of mind. The original of the quarrel, was an Ulster gentleman's stealing a young lady, whom CONNOR, to defeat the prophecy of a Druid at her birth about the disturbances she should occasion, had kept confined and guarded; and though he had given hostages for their safe return as a testimony of his pardon, yet he caused the lover and his two brothers to be assassinated; whose friends, and the hostages themselves, resenting this perfidy, took up arms against him, as it has been said; and retreating into Connaught, they interested the Queen and people of that province in their cause. But whatever might be the Monarch's sentiments as to the subject of the quarrel, his own disposition led him to take no part in it, but to sit by rather as a spectator unconcerned. There was all the reason in the world indeed for him to interpose by his authority between the parties; had it not been for his peculiar disposition, which made him indifferent to whatever happened. For the King of Ulster had married one, and, on her death, another of his daughters; and a third was the Queen of Connaught. But the Monarch having lost his three sons, who were born at a birth, in battle, and who had increased his natural affection by their accomplishments, contracted from thence so great a melancholy and dejection of spirits, as to make him careless about every thing; and from the length of his sighs, his surname of Feyloch was derived.

Having now brought down the history to the restoration of the Pentarchical government under this King, who sat upon the throne of Ireland for twelve years, it will be a proper period for the conclusion of this book; which, if it does nothing more,

more, may teach us to value our own happiness, in living in a less barbarous and more enlightened age, and under a constitution of government, though not perfect, yet undoubtedly the best and most eligible upon earth.

THE
HISTORY
OF
IRELAND.

BOOK IV.

ACHY IV

A.M. 3934

MS.

KEAT-
ING.

O FLA-
HER.

COMER-
FORD.

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NOTWITHSTANDING the care and pains of HUGONY the Great, to secure the succession of the Monarchy to his family in exclusion of the other lines, and to abolish the government of the five provinces by Kings of their own, yet we have seen that the succession was interrupted in less than a hundred years, and the pentarchical government again restored and re-established in three hundred. Thus Monarchies, like other sublunary things, are subject to be the sport of time; and are all of them interrupted or altered in their course by such trivial incidents, as may convince us that the heavens, and not mortals, rule the

the earth. The next in succession to the throne of Ireland, was **ACHY** surnamed **AREM**; as being the first who introduced the custom of burying the dead in graves dug in the earth. He was of the old Heremonian line; and tho' he was Monarch of the island for ten years, yet we hear no more of him than that he was killed, and that his death occasioned a great contention for the Monarchy. After many struggles, the electors rejected all the competitors, and conferred the crown upon **EDERSGOL** the grandson of **DEGAD**, a peaceable, wise, and good Prince, who would probably have made a figure worthy of his descent, had he been permitted to enjoy his dignity long enough for the display of his great abilities. But at the end of five years, he was killed by his successor, and in six months after, his son revenged his death and mounted the throne by the name of **CONARY** the Great, on which he sat sixty years; the longest, happiest, best administered reign in the whole Irish history.

This is the character given of him by their ablest and most impartial writers; and there are reasons sufficient perhaps to justify it. But as an abatement of his glory, and which seems a great impeachment of his equity, because his father had been murdered by a Prince of Leinster out of his ambition to seize the Monarchy, **CONARY** exacted a fine from the whole province, of three hundred cows, three hundred fat hogs, three hundred vessels of ale, and three hundred swords mounted with gold, to be paid every year to him and his successors for ever. It was the highest injustice to make a province answerable for the guilt of a single man; but in that country where the murder of their Monarchs, by those who aspired after the crown, was so frequent as to be almost the constant practice, the injustice of this punishment was greatly aggravated. Not content however with this fine, he obliged them also to give up the whole dominion of Ossory, which

CONARY I

A.M 3937

was then of very large extent, that it might be annexed to the province of Munster his native country : and in order to confirm this surrender in the strongest and most solemn manner possible, he obliged the people of Leinster to swear by heaven and earth, the sun and moon and all the planets, that they, and their posterity should for ever submit to this agreement.

In the first year of this Monarch's reign, the royal palace at Tara was burnt down by accident, which he soon after rebuilt in a very sumptuous manner. The old writers give large, and, I believe, very hyperbolical accounts, of the serenity of the air as well as the tranquillity of the state, and of the extraordinary productions of the earth and sea, in the reign of this favourite Monarch. Nor should all this seem wonderful, they say, when it is considered, that at this time the Saviour of the world was born ; which made these days more auspicious than all that had been before it.

But I find myself obliged to depart in this instance from Mr. O FLAHERTY'S chronology, which I have adopted hitherto all along, as being the most accurate : and whereas he has placed the Christian æra in the first year of this Monarch, which he computes in the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, I follow the chronology of Archbishop USHER, who places that great event in the year of the world four thousand and four, and consequently in the fifty-fifth year of the reign of this Irish Monarch. The difference however is but trifling, and totally immaterial with regard to the history and the transactions which it records. Every one who is at all conversant with subjects of this nature knows, not only how difficult it is to adjust such very ancient æras, but also how much the learned disagree in their computation of the year of the world in which CHRIST was born.

born. If I prefer USHER's to O FLAHERTY's, it is because the greatest number of learned moderns acquiesce in the primate's chronology as the most accurate : and if we only suppose the Christian æra to commence about fifty years later than we find it in the Ogygia, or bring the reign of CONARY and all the epochas in this history about fifty years further down, the difference will be adjusted. The reader will observe then that from this time, the dates in this work are changed from the year of the world to the year of CHRIST, as the most intelligible computation.

Notwithstanding this Monarch enjoyed such a long and peaceful reign, and his name is distinguished in a very extraordinary manner by the historians, yet very few particulars are handed down relating to his administration. It is easy to guess from his character, that all the arts of peace were cultivated as far as the age he lived in permitted ; and we are informed by TACITUS, that the ports and landings in Ireland were better known at this time than those of Britain ; from the much greater commerce that was carried on by the merchants to the former. A reign of sixty years had never been seen in this country before ; nor was it less extraordinary, that it should continue almost the whole time in peace. Here was therefore opportunity enough for a wise and a good Monarch, to acquire fame and glory to himself, by extending and securing the happiness of his people. For without peace and tranquillity, at home especially, it is impossible for the best and wisest Prince in the world, to give a lustre and improvement to arts and sciences, or to promote trade and commerce ; and with the advantage of the most profound and undisturbed repose, unless a Prince has talents, and a disposition to exert them
for

for the public good, his government will be marked by desolation and oppression, by the poverty and servitude of his subjects.

The Irish Monarch, we are told, had both abilities and a heart for government ; and without being informed of the particulars of his conduct in public affairs, we may reasonably conclude, that he formed and executed the best projects in his power to the great and good design of the public happiness. For he could not have acquired the glory which he did acquire, in such an age of liberty and fierce contention, if he had not deserved it. His administration however, wise and benevolent as we have supposed it, did not secure him from all disturbance. A set of insolent and seditious people, of which a son of a King of Wales was at the head, had obliged CONARY to banish them out of the island. In revenge of this treatment, they drew together all the men of desperate fortune whom they could meet with ; and engaging them in the conspiracy for the sake of plunder, they made a descent upon Ireland in the night time, marched in secrecy to the palace at Tara where the Monarch lay, and setting the whole building on fire he perished in the flames. In this manner ended the reign and life of CONARY the great : and his death caused such confusion among all the Princes and the people, that an interregnum of five years ensued before another Monarch was elected.

LUGAD I. LUGAD, a Prince of the Heremonian line, at length filled the throne ; though he had committed incest with his mother many years before. He afterwards obtained a daughter of the King of Denmark in marriage, for whose death he was so much afflicted, that after a reign of eight years he fell upon his own sword and put an end to his life. His successor enjoying the monarchy but one year,

CRIMTHAN,

CRIMTHAN, the son of LUGAD, by his mother, was invested with it.

It has appeared in the second book of this history, that the Picts had in former times a great connexion with the people of Ireland, and were in some degree tributaries to their monarchs. In the reign of CRIMTHAN, who had married a daughter of a Pictish Prince, some of the Irish forces became auxiliaries to the Picts against the Romans in Britain. As faction may be said to be the disease of liberty, so no free states perhaps are without it. Ireland, the freest state that ever existed under a monarchy, was never without its factions, as we have seen; and at this time there was a very powerful one formed against the Monarch. But as he was distinguished by his bravery and success against his enemies, and beloved among the people, an opposition at home appeared of little consequence. A chief of the faction therefore against him applied to AGRICOLA the Roman governor then in Britain, and encouraged him all he could to make a descent on Ireland: assuring him, according to TACITUS, of a certain conquest with only a single legion and a few auxiliaries. An invasion of Ireland in consequence of this advice would have been undertaken by the Roman general, if he had not been recalled soon after; but had it been undertaken with so small a force as had been declared sufficient, the Romans, it is easy to see, would have lost their aim;—as CÆSAR did in his first expedition against Britain with two legions—and the thought of invading Ireland was never afterwards resumed. Indeed the Roman arms in Britain declined so much from this time, that the Picts and their allies the Irish, headed by CRIMTHAN himself in person, made irruptions into the Roman province, where their superiority was confessed; and they

CRIMT. I

A. D. 74.

they returned to their own country loaded with spoils and foreign trophies. Among these were reckoned some shields and weapons of extraordinary workmanship and art; besides equipages, jewels, and other ornaments of value. But this was not the whole acquisition of the Irish Monarch in this expedition. Many arts both military and mechanic, which he learnt of his enemies, he converted to the use and advantage of his subjects, and for the better discipline of his troops. But in the midst of his great designs, and after a reign of sixteen years full of glory and reputation, CRIMTHAN the first lost his life by an unfortunate fall from his horse near his own palace.

CARBRY At the death of this Monarch, the Milesian succession in the throne of Ireland was interrupted, after it had continued eleven hundred years. Though **KEATING** and other writers pass over this first plebeian war in silence, and place the rebellion of the usurper above forty years after this time, yet I make no difficulty in rejecting their authority in this, as well as in many other instances, and in following **O FLAHERTY** and the author of the Dissertations, who are infinitely more accurate. A conspiracy having been formed among the posterity of the Belgians in the several provinces, who thought themselves treated with too much severity, they irritated the common people to take up arms in their defence; and under a pretence of abolishing the tyranny of their Kings they massacred the nobility in several parts of the kingdom, and set **CARBRY** of the Belgian race upon the throne, who filled it for five years till his death. Whatever views his party might have, and how strong soever their hopes might be built upon **MORAN** his son whom they elected to succeed him, yet, by a virtue scarcely ever heard of, **MORAN** refused the regal title; and by his example, and abilities prevailed upon
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the people to relinquish their rebellion, and to restore the royal family in the person of FEREDACH the son of CRIMTHAN. There is not in all history, as I remember, another instance of a revolution like this; brought about by the self-denial and strength of mind of a single man, called to the exercise of royal power through the wickedness and perfidy of his own father, divesting himself of it, and disarming a furious giddy multitude, in order to establish the public tranquillity and to set the lawful heir upon the throne. "It is astonishing to observe what an influence one man in certain conjunctures can acquire over a factious and noisy multitude: for in proportion as they are fickle and inconsiderate they are easily led either this way or that; and though they often pursue their schemes with rashness and even with fury, yet for the most part those schemes are general and directed to some common interest, and not to gratify the resentment, or ambition of particular men."

FEREDACH therefore, though dreaded and hated by the licentious populace, was by the means of the worthy son of a wicked traitor elected to the Monarchy; and by his upright administration he acquired the name of FEREDACH the just. A Prince of this disposition, we may be sure, was not ungrateful to the man whose virtue was the sole cause of his exaltation; and we are told that he took MORAN into a great share of the government, and appointed him Chief justice of Ireland. Let the reader figure to himself such a Monarch and such a Minister at one and the same time, and he will soon conceive the happiness of the people: he will see misrule giving place to harmony, insurrection subsiding into tranquillity, and order arising out of confusion. Such was the state of Ireland at the end of the first plebeian war; and under such governors it could not be otherwise. Men endowed,

FERE-
DACH.

A. D. 95.

ed, as they were, with so large a proportion of the ethereal spirit,—as Lord BOLINGBROKE calls it, —would at no time act upon other principles than for the public good : but in those days of jealousy and popular contention, they could not with safety act upon any other. The greatest commendations are bestowed upon the wisdom and integrity of their government. Among other accounts of their public measures promoting the welfare of the state, the Bards have recorded a mythological fable of a collar worn by MORAN in the execution of his office ; and which the modern historians have been weak enough to deliver down as real history. That this judge might be always upright and impartial in administering justice according to the Monarch's and his own desire, the fable tells us, that they contrived a collar to be worn round his neck, of a property so wonderful and so useful, that, whenever the judge was deviating from equity, would contract itself, and pinch him in exact proportion to his error ; and at all other times would hang loose and easy.

The collar however was not so much for the use of MORAN, whose integrity never left him, as for other judges who might succeed him ; and to extort the truth also from witnesses in the courts of law. Thus, if it was put about the neck of a wicked judge who intended an unjust or partial sentence, it would continue skrinking 'till it strangled him, or 'till he changed his sentence into a just one ; when it would instantly dilate and set him at liberty. In the same manner it would act about the neck of an evidence on a trial : and from hence arose a custom in the judicatories of that kingdom, for the Judge, when he suspected the veracity of a witness and had a mind to terrify him from perjury, to charge him solemnly to tell the truth, or else his life would pay for it, as the collar of MORAN was

was about his neck. The reader, I am sure, will want no assistance in explaining this fable; and all the reflection I shall make upon it, is that it would be well for the present age if we had MORAN's collar here; not on account of the Judges, whose integrity, it must be said to their honour, wants no preservative; but on account of witnesses in the Courts of justice, where perjury is more notorious than in any age that has been before it. When FEREDACH had reigned one and twenty years, with the greatest glory to himself and with peace and happiness to his people, he died a natural death, regretted and beloved.

The successor of this Prince underwent the usual fate of the Irish Monarchs, in three years after his election to the throne, by the hand of the son of FEREDACH; who had not the same abilities and good fortune as his father had; and who after an uneasy reign of seven years was murdered at the breaking out of the second Plebeian war. The name of "Attacots" was given to these rebels in memory of their horrid cruelties; and afterwards it reached to North Britain, as a proper name for all seditious disturbers of the public peace; but in process of time, it was no longer used in this restrained and odious sense, but became appropriated to the people inhabiting close to Adrians wall in Britain. The second Attacotic war proved in some degree more destructive than the first, by many of the provincial Kings engaging in it, and making their own private prejudices and complaints pass with others for the public cause. Old as this artifice is, and detected so much as it hath been, it still continues to impose upon mankind; and at this day we are as much the dupes of pretended patriots, deceiving ourselves and being deceived with sounds, as the Irish were at the time I am writing of. The provincial Kings, expecting more from the son of

FIATACH
A. D. 116
FIACHA.
FEREDACH

FEREDACH than it was in his power to do, and perhaps expecting it because he was the son of such a father, grew uneasy and discontented under his government; and at the end of seven years entering into a conspiracy, of which ELIM the King of Ulster was at the head, they irritated the people to a rebellion under the guise of liberty, put the Monarch to death in a seditious manner, and set the crown upon ELIM the principal champion of their cause. But it was not long before the people found to their cost that they were mistaken; and that they had changed the imagined tyranny of a single Monarch, for the real anarchy and misrule of several contending Princes.

The son of their late King, with a few of his friends that were attached to him, passed over to North Britain to a Pictish King his mother's father; 'till a fair occasion should offer in which he might assert his right. In the mean while ELIM, the chief usurper, attended to nothing but the exercise of his power, and the keeping those under who had lifted him into the throne. All the schemes of utility, formed and established by FEREDACH and MORAN, were laid aside; or neglected; the arts and sciences were left to shift for themselves; and even history and learning were rather discountenanced than protected. What an unhappy reverse of times for the people of Ireland! amidst the confusion introduced by such a government, trade and commerce languished gradually 'till they were almost extinguished; the fields became uncultivated; and, to compleat their misery, a grievous famine ensued. No less than four years passed away in this manner, when the spirit of the people being roused by their distresses, they determined to bring about a change of government in favour of the son of their late King, and the grandson of their favourite FEREDACH the Just. To this purpose they sent an invitation

invitation to him to Scotland, assuring him of their assistance to recover the crown. TUATHAL was no sooner informed of the deplorable state of his native country, and of the readiness of the people to rise in his favour, than he determined to attempt the possession of the monarchy, and to abolish the tyranny of the usurpers. Assisted by his grandfather, at the head of some of his Pictish veteran troops, he landed in Ireland; and meeting many of his friends ready to join him with their forces, he marched directly to Tara, where several of the principal men of the kingdom were assembled, and where with joyful acclamations he was elected King.

The usurper ELIM, and his coadjutors the provincial Princes, being greatly alarmed at these proceedings, prepared with the utmost vigour for their defence; but they soon felt the difference, between the affections of a people gained by wise and mild and beneficial measures of government, and those that were enraged by tyranny and oppression. It was not long before the two armies met, and ELIM's forces being defeated and himself slain in the battle, the Monarch pursued his victory over all the provinces; and being successful in every engagement against the rebels, he put an end to the usurpation, redeemed the people from the oppression of the Attacots, and restored tranquillity to the kingdom. In this manner ended the second Plebeian war; and in such vastly different colours, are the characters of FEREDACH, and ELIM, delivered down to posterity! What a lesson is this, not only to Kings and rulers, but to all those whose rank and office makes them great enough to be recorded! teaching them what they must expect, and what they may justly dread from history; whose voice, if they are unworthy, will proclaim

TUATHAL.

A.D. 130.

their infamy, whatever power they may once have had to silence or corrupt it.

When TUATHAL had thoroughly settled himself on the throne, he convened the general assembly of the states at Tara after the manner of his predecessors; who always held a Parliament in the beginning of their reign, to consult on the affairs of government, and to promote the public welfare. The members of the assembly met him with great pleasure, recognized his title to the crown, and the constitution being again recovered, they took an oath of fidelity to continue the succession to his family, in exclusion of the other lines, as their ancestors had done to HUGONY the Great; by way of atonement for their sedition, and as a recompence for the service he had done his country. For if we suppose, as some of their writers do, that this engagement was entered into as a remedy for those evils which they had smarted under through an elective form of government, they would surely have carried the remedy so far as to complete the cure, by making the crown hereditary, and not elective in this family; and as they did not make such an improvement in their constitution, they only exchanged the evil which they redressed for another almost as great. But it may perhaps admit of a question, whether they thought that such an alteration in the law of succession would be indeed an improvement of the constitution; or at least, whether they did not choose to submit to the many inconveniences attending popular elections of their Monarchs, rather than to have them imposed upon the country by the right of primogeniture. Both methods have their inconveniences; and there is no civil institution perhaps without them.

But amongst a people so jealous of public liberty as the Irish had always been, it is probable that they preferred the former, not by accident or through

through ignorance, but upon deliberation and by choice; though they sometimes hazarded their safety, and the public tranquillity was for the most part interrupted by it. It must be owned that by making merit and superior abilities the qualifications for the monarchy, without regard to succession, very noble purposes were answered, and great evils avoided, as well as much inconvenience sometimes suffered. Of the first sort was the raising a spirit of emulation and real patriotism in the breasts of youth; and impressing and cultivating the most manly and virtuous principles, in opposition to the temptations of corrupted nature. Of the evils avoided by it the reader may form a notion from what one of their writers has said in its vindication; and I will give it in his own words. "But still how much wiser is such an ordinance, than that which throws all the acquisitions of an ancient and renowned family, into the hands of an half ideot or a licensed madman, without person, or parts, or humanity, or courage; one commonly remarkable for the commission of every kind of extravagance that can be a reproach to himself and the community which tolerates him. How many instances have we seen of such profligates in our own time. How often have we seen the laborious acquisitions of virtue and valour, the tenure of ages, undermined in almost a moment by a pest of this kind; who sets fire to the train with his own hands, and often takes a frantic pride worthy of such a monster in the violence of the explosion [r]." The description is strong, but it is not unjust; and if there was not a remedy for this evil by deposing the madman, which has been often applied in our own country, an hereditary monarchy by right of birth might be more inconvenient than that which now obtained in Ireland.—But to turn again to the history.

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[r] Dissertations, &c. p. 80, 81.

In the same Parliament at Tara, in which the title of **TYATHAL** to the crown was recognized, and the succession in his family; though not by mere primogeniture without merit or valour, was passed into a law and sworn to, a decree was made for the separation of a large tract of land from each of the four provinces, which met together at a certain place, for the Demefne lands of the crown; in order to supply the Monarch's household, and to give a splendour and magnificence to the government that was never known before. The part which was thus divided from the rest and thus appropriated, the King appointed for the county of Meath, as it is at this day; and which before consisted only of an inconsiderable territory in those parts. In each of these portions taken out of the four provinces, a magnificent palace was erected in this reign for particular and different uses. In the tract taken from Munster and added now to Meath, the King erected an edifice for the sacred fire; to which the Druids and Augurs were to repair on the last day of October annually, in order to consume the sacrifices that were offered to their Deities. No other fire on that night, under the penalty of a heavy fine, was to be lighted in any house in the kingdom, that all the fires might be derived from this sacred fire, in order to make them propitious and prevent their doing mischief; for which every family was to pay a fine of three-pence to the King of Munster as a compensation for the land he had lost.

In the proportion taken from the province of Connaught, a palace was erected for the convocation of **Visneach**, at which all the inhabitants who were able were to appear on the first of May, to offer sacrifice to **BEL** the chief Deity of the island, and which was called the Bell-Tine; that is the festival of **BEL** the God of fire, mentioned in the Introduction.

troducti^on. The Britons worshipped the same Deity ; and from thence it is probable was derived the custom of the festival in England on May-day ; celebrated by morris dancers and milk maids, with garlands of flowers, and such other decorations as they can procure. But this is merely my own conjecture, and of no sort of moment whether it is right or wrong. It was customary upon this day in almost every village in Ireland, to kindle two fires in honour of BEL, and to drive their cattle of every kind between them ; from a superstitious conceit that it would preserve them from the murrain, and other pestilential distempers for that year. At this convocation of Visneach, the inhabitants, for want of the convenience of coin of any kind, used to barter their horses, arms, and other effects with which they abounded, for what they stood in need of ; which was the way of buying and selling in those ages. The King of Connaught, as a tribute or acknowledgment for the lands taken from his province where this convocation assembled, had a horse and arms from every Lord of a manor, and from every chieftain who attended it.

The third palace was that of Tailtean, and originally belonged to the province of Ulster. Here the celebrated fair was held on the first of August, in honour of the last Belgian queen of that name, and established by King LUGHAD, as it was mentioned in his reign ; in commemoration of the care she had taken of his education in arms and literature. To this fair the inhabitants brought all their children who were of a proper age for marriage, and contracted for the disposal of them. That there might be no disorder nor confusion, the young men stood all on one side and the women on the other ; and when every thing was adjusted between the parents of those who expressed a liking for each other,

the bride folks were taken out and the ceremony was performed. As barbarous as this institution may appear to have been, yet it had an ignorant and early age in which it was practised for its excuse. But what excuse is there for an English custom, not less savage and more unnatural, in the present age of politeness and refinement among the families of the great ; where generally no regard is had to the liking on either side, where they often know little more of each other, than the poor Irish did, before the match is made, and where interest alone is the bond of an union, the most intimate and tender, and which is to last for life ? No wonder that matrimony, when it is thus concluded, should be complained of as the source of much unhappiness !

Though the fair of Tailtean had been established long ago, as it is had been said, yet no palace had been erected till the reign of TUATHAL ; and as a compensation to the King of Ulster for the part of his province taken into Meath on which the palace stood, from every couple that were married he received an ounce of silver. The palace of Tara was also rebuilt, and much improved by this monarch, which originally belonged to the province of Leinster ; but I shall refer the reader to the reign of OLLAM FODLA in the second book for the uses of this palace ; where he will find a very particular and exact account of it. I don't find that any tribute or acknowledgement was paid to the King of Leinster, as to the other provincial Kings ; and the reason I suppose was that Tara had for many ages before been separated from that province, for the royal palace and residence of the monarch.

All the historians concur in giving TUATHAL the character of one of the best and wisest Princes that ever sat on the throne of Ireland ; who introduced a state of plenty and publick tranquillity that was never known in it before. He was guilty however of an act of great injustice towards the province of Leinster, the fatal effects of which extended to near

six hundred years ; and at the time when it was committed, prevented in a great degree the succour of the Picts, the allies of Ireland, who were then reduced to the utmost distress by the Roman army. It was in its consequences an affair of great importance in the Irish history, and the account which is given of it is this. ACHY the King of Leinster, having married a daughter of TUATHAL, whom he carried home into that province, in about a year afterwards made a visit to the Monarch at Tara ; and acquainting him with the death of his daughter solicited her sister to become his wife ; as the only way to repair his loss, and to preserve the alliance and friendship of the King of Ireland. The treaty being accepted and carried into execution, ACHY took this lady also home to his palace : But finding on her arrival there that her sister was still living, and that they were both abused by the King of Leinster, the surprize and vexation threw her immediately into fits ; which succeeded each other so fast and with so much violence, as to put an end to her life. The surprize of the Queen at first sight, supposing she came to her on a visit, was not so great we may be sure ; but when she had heard the melancholy tale of her husband's baseness, her indignation, and the grief she felt for the death of her sister and the cruel occasion of it, were the cause of her own death soon after.

The Irish Monarch being informed of the treachery of the King of Leinster, and the tragical end of his two daughters, determined to take his revenge for this indignity offered to him in the persons of his children : and had he contented himself with chastising ACHY very severely he would have done an act of justice to society, as well as have made a sacrifice to his own resentment. But the resentment of TUATHAL was not to be appeased without cruelty ;

and it will be a blot upon his memory to all posterity. Dispatching therefore messengers to the other princes and chiefs, to complain of the villany of the King of Leinster and to demand their assistance towards his punishment, he raised all the forces that he could, and marched into the province with a resolution to destroy it by fire and sword. When ACHY was informed of the great strength of the army that was got together against him, and finding that it would be in vain for him to think of making a stand against a force so much superior to his own, he sent a message to the Monarch in the most submissive terms to sue for a cessation of arms, that he might atone for his offence in a treaty of peace. The Monarch might feel some compunction at the thoughts of ravaging the country and killing or ruining its inhabitants for the personal crime of a single man, though he was their King; and if he deserved the character which is given of him in other respects by the historians, it must touch his humanity very strongly.

The injustice in this instance, I presume will appear to the reader to be extremely flagrant; and yet is it not done in our own age every day, nay do we not do it ourselves, without perceiving it? What else were all the wars in Christendom arising from but the ambition of particular Princes, and the chastisement or the check of that ambition, in the persons, in the property, and in the countries of their subjects? what else were the wars that we, and most of the powers of Europe, have been engaged in? Were not the blood, and treasure, and tranquillity of the people, who were innocent of the offence, and who could not prevent the pride and injustice that we complained of, were not these the sacrifice to, our resentment against their sovereign? This will teach us that war, however necessary

cessary sometimes to recover or vindicate our right, as in the late case, yet in its consequence is diabolical. The people who alone commit the injury, and who therefore in equity and good conscience should alone be punished, are almost the only people who escape all punishment. They sit at home in their palaces far from the horrid scene, enjoying ease and pleasure, amusing themselves with the news of conquest or defeat, adding one scheme of wild ambition to another; whilst their innocent subjects are pillaged, undone, or slaughtered, their territories devastated, and the families of thousands, who survive the loss of parents or husbands, made miserable for ever. This is a lesson to Princes which few Princes learn: it will however teach us all not to delight in war, which, how necessary soever, is a dreadful evil; to assert, our right, if it is possible, in the way of treaty; and if war at last is unavoidable, that it should be carried on with as little injury to private property, and with as much humanity to the unhappy sufferers, as the nature of it will admit. We are a sensible, humane and benevolent people, but we suffer our passion for national glory to run away with our understandings; and we don't stay to consider that this passion is artfully enflamed by those who make a great private fortune by the public distress. But to return.

Whatever were the sentiments of the Irish Monarch on this subject, it is certain that he pushed his resentment against the King of Leinster much further than he ought to have done. For although he forbore to destroy his province, as he might have done, with fire and sword, yet the only accommodation which he would agree to, was a tribute to be paid every second year to him and his successors for ever, of three thousand cows, as many hogs, as many sheep, as many copper cauldrons, as many ounces of silver and the same number of mantles; and to
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this contract the King and people of Leinster were by a solemn oath to bind themselves, and, as far as lay in their power, their successors for ever. If there was any pretence for punishing the people of the province by this fine for the dishonour done to **TUATHAL** by their Prince, there was not surely the least shadow of justice in continuing it after his death; and we shall see in the sequel that the payment of it, though submitted to for several ages, was the frequent occasion of many contests, which proved fatal to the nobility and gentry on both sides, 'till it was abolished. Without exaggeration therefore it may be said, that he was the author of these calamities, by sowing the seed of contentions in imposing a tax upon a province, for a personal injury from one Prince to another, and contrary to equity and common sense to be continued for ever. Whenever cruel and unjust conditions are submitted to by a people, they are submitted to only through the necessity of the times, and for want of power to resist them: but whenever they are in a capacity to do themselves justice, they will no longer submit to those conditions. Of this sort was the fine imposed by **TUATHAL**, known in Ireland by the name of the Borome or Leinster tribute; unjust and tyrannical in itself, and productive of infinite mischief to ages then unborn; and that he might interest many others besides his successors in demanding it, a third part was to be paid to the people of Meath the territory of the Monarch, a third to the inhabitants of Connaught, and the other third to the **NIALS** of the North, all of them his auxiliaries in this expedition.

There is nothing more relating to this Monarch in the public history, than that he convened assemblies at Cruachain and Eamania for the regulation of the police, and the encouragement of arts and manufactures; as it was mentioned in the Introduction.

duction. For since the death of FEREDACH, and during the usurpation of the plebeians, these assemblies, as well as the parliament at Tara, had been disused ; and many corruptions and disorders had crept into public affairs, which TUATHAL made it the business of his government to redress. Thus the tradesmen and mechanicks, as well as the artists of all professions, were under the management of a committee, who had power to examine into their abilities, to reform all abuses, and to suspend such as by their unfairness or want of skill brought their occupation into discredit. It must be observed that till this reign, few or none of the posterity of the Milesians submitted to any trade: the lower branches were the militia of the island, the historians, antiquaries, physicians, harpers, judges, heralds, and inferior officers of the state, who would not submit to any manual labour, lest they should degrade their original, or bring a stain upon their families ; and the mechanicks of the country were the remainder of the Belgians and Danonians, who had been permitted to remain there, in order to carry on these servile occupations. This pride has been so inherent from that time to this, that Bishop BERKLEY has said, “ a kitchen wench in his family refused to carry out cinders, because she was descended from an old Irish stock.” But in the reign of this Monarch, when they saw that the legislature took trade and manufactures under their management, and that no person was allowed to exercise arts without a license from a committee empowered by a general assembly of the states, many of the Milesians condescended to follow some employment, and to make themselves good for something besides cutting one anothers throats. TUATHAL having reigned with greater splendour than any of his predecessors, for thirty years, at last fell in battle by the hands of his successor of the line of Ir ; and consequently

frequently the engagement entered into with **TUATHAL** was broke in the first instance. But however his son revenged this perfidy, by killing the Monarch who had possessed the throne, at the end of four years, and by calling back the people to their loyalty in his own election.

FEIDLIM.

A.D. 164.

FEIDLIM the son of **TUATHAL** having thus obtained the crown, was from his great love of justice furnamed the Legislator. He not only gave excellent examples of equitable government in his own private conduct, but he got the Parliament at **Tara**, at its first convention in his reign, to establish the law of retaliation. From this time, every sentence and decree which he passed upon any criminal was exactly conformable to this law; and he enjoined an observance of the same exactness in all the public judicatories in the kingdom. If any one had defrauded another of his cattle, his sheep, or any part of his property, or if he had destroyed the use of an arm, a leg, an eye, or had taken away his life, the criminal was to make satisfaction in the like kind; and it was not in the power of the person injured to commute the offence. By the terror of this law, the people of Ireland were brought to more humanity, honesty, and good manners of every kind, than they ever were before; and the monarch enjoyed the fruits of his just and useful administration, during the nine years of his reign, 'till a natural death removed him out of the world. A much greater authority than that of any human legislator hath given a sanction to the law established by this Monarch; and it seems astonishing that it should be discontinued in any Christian Country. It is not only the most equitable law in itself; I presume to say, that can be conceived, against wilful injury, but in its consequence bids fairer than any other to promote public order and integrity.

But

But be this however as it may ; I have given it as my opinion in another work [s,] which I shall now repeat, “ that we presume too much on our power of making laws, and too far infringe on the command of God, by taking away the lives of men, in the manner we do in England, for theft and robbery ; and this is not only a pernicious error,—“ for extreme justice is an extreme injury”—but a national abomination. It must be granted that all societies have a power within themselves of making laws to secure property, and of annexing punishments to the breach of them : but then on the other hand it must be owned, that no man or body of men can have power to make laws which are contrary to the laws of God ; or to ordain such punishments for the breach of them as he hath positively forbidden. It is to little purpose to urge, that men may give up their natural rights for their mutual benefit, and to hold their lives and liberties on certain terms and conditions, on the breach of which they should be forfeited : because though this argument will hold with regard to liberty and property, it will not hold with regard to life ; of which God alone is the sole disposer, and over which we have no right in ourselves or in other men. A robber indeed in this country sins with his eyes open, and knows the penalty which he is going to incur : but the wilfulness of the crime is no sort of excuse for making the punishment far exceed the heinousness of the transgression : and who will deny that a little theft or robbery—perhaps of the value of two or three shillings only—is not punished infinitely beyond a just proportion, when it is punished with death ?

These laws however, in my opinion, are not more abominable, than they are ill contrived ; if this observation,

[s] Hist. of Utopia, note p. 42, 43, in the Memoirs of the Life of Sir THO. MORE.

servation, which men versed in affairs make, is true, that the riches of the nation are in proportion to the number of hands employed in works of skill and labour. How many hands of this sort which might be so employed; in making sails and cordage for the navy, in our fleets or dock-yards, in mending the highways, or converting waste land into tillage, are sent every sessions to Tyburn for theft and robbery, the reader need not be told. The laws of God affix no other punishment to these crimes than ample restitution or perpetual slavery: a word of great horror in England where we boast so highly of our liberty: but it does not require the spirit of prophecy to foresee, that this liberty, which is now in many cases our misery, will some time or other be our destruction. A confinement of this sort to constant labour for the public—whatever name we give it—would be dreaded worse than death by these wretches who have no idea of a future state, and consequently would deter them more from the commission of such crimes; which is the only reasonable end of punishment in a state.” The reader, it is hoped, will excuse this digression, on account of its importance and good intention, whether or no it should give him any pleasure or conviction.

The throne of Ireland being vacant by the death of FEIDLIM, the Heremonian line was again continued by the election of CATHIR, surnamed the Great: but whose short reign of three years only
 CATHIR. A.D. 174. when he was slain in battle, contained nothing memorable or worthy of a place in history. His surname was therefore probably given him, not on account of any remarkable valour in the field, or any extraordinary abilities in the cabinet, but for the immense wealth which he was possessed of; and which he disposed of by will among his ten sons, and some of the chiefs of the province of Leinster,
 of

of which he had been King. Indeed according to the particulars related of this will, there was sufficient reason for giving him the surname of Great ; and it is very much to be questioned, if any Monarch in Europe was ever possessed of a more valuable personal estate than this Irish King. His wealth however availed him as little as it does other princes ; and CONN, called the hero of the hundred battles, having killed him in an engagement, mounted the throne.

Few of all the Monarchs of Ireland displayed greater abilities than this son of FEIDLIM the Legislator ; and none had their abilities more tried, both in prosperity and distress, through a course of five and thirty years which he held the crown. The King of Leinster refusing, and with great reason, to pay the tribute which this Monarch's grandfather TUATHAL had imposed, CONN immediately declared war against him, but after two engagements he was defeated ; and the King of Leinster making an incursion as far as the palace of Tara, possessed himself of it for four years. In the mean time, CONN being mortified with this disgrace of being driven from his residence, collected all his forces, regained the palace of Tara, vanquished the King of Leinster in several battles, and obliged the province to pay the tribute as long as he lived.

The line of HEBER having been dispossessed of the province of Munster by the descendants of DEGAD, as the reader may remember, EUGENE the Great, who had also the name of MOGHA NUADAT, a Prince of Munster of the Heberian line, disgusted at the ascendancy which the other family had acquired in his province, retired into Leinster to a son of CATHIR the Great, who at that time had the government of the province. Having there contracted an alliance of friendship with that Prince, and being assisted by him with a choice body of troops

CONN.

A. D. 177

troops for the recovery of his right, EUGENE marched in a hostile manner into Munster, and was met by ANGUS the King of the province with a numerous army. They no sooner met than a fierce and bloody battle ensued, the success of which was for a good while doubtful ; but victory declaring at last for EUGENE, he totally routed the enemy, and drove them out of the province. ANGUS, enraged to be thus defeated, repaired immediately to CONN the King of Ireland to entreat his assistance. The King supplied him with a body of fifteen thousand men ; and thus reinforced, he marched into Munster, with a resolution, formed by revenge and indignation, to recover his crown, or perish in the attempt. He found EUGENE waiting for him with his army drawn out in order of battle ; and as it was accustomed to victory, it soon broke through the allied army of ANGUS ; of the greatest part of which they made a terrible slaughter, and put the rest to a general rout. Animated with this success, EUGENE banished the De-gad colony out of the province of Munster, excepting those however who were contented to submit peaceably to the change of government.

The Monarch, who was related to the dethroned King of Munster, resenting this injury as well as the defeat of his troops, declared war against him as a principal ; and after various successes drove the usurper out of the kingdom. Nine years this hero lived an exile in Spain ; and having married a sister of a Prince of that country, he found means to insinuate himself into the affections of the Spaniards and to procure their assistance to revenge his cause. The Prince conducted him back to Ireland with so powerful a fleet and army, that he not only recovered the province of Munster, but by several engagements which he had with the Monarch, in which the latter always was defeated, he divided
the

the whole island with him ; and the invincible Hero of the hundred battles was obliged to submit, for the sake of peace, to this dismembring of his dominions. This division was known and remembered in after ages, by the names of Leath-Con, and Leath-Mogha ; the former denoting the Northern half, and the latter the Southern half of the island ; which the reader is desired to keep in remembrance. Before a year expired under this settlement, the ambitious spirit of EUGENE put him upon new demands ; and CONN was convinced that nothing less would satisfy him than the entire Monarchy of the island. Being determined therefore to yield nothing further than he had done, a war on both sides was prepared for ; but the King of Ireland perceiving that he was much inferior in strength to his rival and his Spanish auxiliaries which he had still detained, came one morning into his camp, and surprizing them in their beds, put the princes to the sword, and restored peace to the Kingdom during the remainder of his life.

In this manner ended the glory of the famous EUGENE the Great, who had two other surnames besides that of MOGHA NUADAT : and if it shews too much security and incaution in such an experienced General, on the other hand it betrays a mean and cruel artifice unjustifiable towards an enemy, and therefore very unworthy of so great a Monarch as CONN, the renowned hero of the hundred battles. EUGENE left a son by his Spanish Princess named OLLIOLL OLOM, who, we shall find, will make a great figure in this history at the head of the province of Munster, and even married to the daughter of CONN the mortal enemy of his father. I shall take no other notice of a fable in the life of EUGENE, of a Druid foretelling a famine seven years before it happened, and persuading him to build store-houses and buy up all the spare provisions,

provisions, than to acquaint the reader that such a fable there is ; no doubt either invented, or at least amplified at first by Druidic craft, but which some writers have been weak enough to relate as real history.

CONA-
RY II.

A.D. 212.

The peace of the nation being secured, and the Degad family again established in the province of Munster, the Monarch raised them to the highest pitch of grandeur in his power ; by giving his daughter to a young Prince of that family, who succeeded him in the throne by the name of CONARY II. The King of Ulster having conceived a mortal hatred against CONN, disguised fifty ruffians in the habit of women ; and when the Monarch was preparing to celebrate the feast and hold the Parliament at Tara, being unattended by any guards, the ruffians attacked and murdered him. If the King of Ulster proposed by this assassination, as it is probable he did, to get himself elected into the Monarchy, he was not only disappointed in his aim by the advancement of CONARY the Second, but he entailed such miseries on his province by the revenge that was taken on his perfidy, as ended at last in the extirpation of his family, and the establishment of the Heremonian line ; as we shall see hereafter. This great access of power to the Degad now the Conarian race, made the Heberian and Irian lines, who from the beginning had possessed the two Munster provinces, extremely jealous of the Heremonian interest ; now united by the alliance and close conjunction of the two branches abovementioned. They found the latter gaining stronger power than even in the heart of their own country ; and they shewed their discontent too plainly not to have it perceived, that they would improve every opportunity to abate or crush it.

CONARY

CONARY the second, a wise and considerate Prince, foresaw that these discontents, joined to the great power which the Heberians had still in this province, must one day prove disadvantageous to his family; and therefore he made use of his present advantages, as sovereign of the island, to provide against the danger. To this end he made enquiries after that part of the race of DEGAD, who had remained in Ulster when he was driven from thence; and by a treaty of friendship and alliance with them, he provided for the future safety and establishment of his family. In consequence of this treaty, and in spite of all opposition from the Irian line, he got his own relation and a Prince of the Degad race elected King of Ulster; which gave them such a settlement in that province as some time afterwards put the greatest part of it into their hands. But his untimely end, through the treachery of NEMETH his own near relation, who murdered him in the ninth year of his reign, prevented the bringing his plan to the perfection which he had intended. From this CONARY King of Ireland, descended the Dalriads of Scotland; who will make a great figure in the sequel of this history, as giving Kings to that country, and in process of time to England. What the particular grounds of the quarrel were between NEMETH and the King the history does not inform us; but as we are told that he married the Queen in a short time after he had assassinated the Monarch, it is not improbable that his passion for her might be the occasion of it. It does not appear that he made any attempt to possess the throne; but if he had any such view he was disappointed: nor did his marriage of the Queen prevent her sons from entering into measures to revenge the death of their father upon the assassin.

ARTHUR **A.D. 220.** CONARY the Second was succeeded by ART
 or ARTHUR the melancholy, a son of CONN ; who
 held the government of the island, amidst great dis-
 sensions in his family, for thirty years. One of
 his sisters, as we have 'said, was first married to
 CONARY, and then to his murderer ; and another
 whose name was SABA, the widow of MACNIAD
 by whom she had a son called MAC-CONN, was
 afterwards the wife of OLLIOLL OLOM above-
 mentioned, the King of Munster. The factions
 among these powerful descendents of CONN-KED-
 CATHACH, as all frictions do, proved a great detri-
 ment to the state ; and whilst some abetted the
 claims of one party, and others sided with those
 who opposed them, the welfare of the publick had
 little or no attention. It does not seem from the
 surname of the Monarch, that he was capable of
 entering into great affairs, which require a vi-
 gorous active spirit as well as judgment and sagaci-
 ty ; and during the thirty years of his reign, we
 hear of nothing worthy the Monarch or the hero
 'till the last action of his life in which he fell. The
 reader may remember a revolution in the province of
 Munster in favour of the Heremonian line : and as
 it was made without any disturbance or opposition,
 the family of HEBER, who had 'till then held the go-
 vernment of that province, were admitted into the
 principal state offices. On the other hand, when this
 family possessed the throne of their ancestors as we
 have seen they sometimes did, the Heremonian line
 were entrusted with the same authority, and pre-
 sided particularly in the Courts of Justice. We
 are told that this succession in the posts of trust and
 honour continued 'till the time of OLLIOLL OLOM ;
 who banished MAC CONN, the son of his wife by a
 former husband, that had been brought up in his
 court, and was made Chief Justice of the province,
 for

for a corruption which he was convicted of in the execution of his office.

How the King of Munster had a power to banish a criminal further than out of his own province we are not told ; and it is not unlikely that he was obliged to have recourse to the authority of the Monarch to transport the offender out of the island ; as we may conjecture from the sequel. The exiled Prince, being of a factious and turbulent disposition, and thinking himself injured greatly by his banishment, was bent upon revenge. But to return into his own country in a hostile manner, in spite of the sentence which had expelled him from it, without a force sufficient to sustain him in his rebellion, was more likely to procure his own destruction than to hurt his enemy. He therefore applied himself to BEIN-BRIT a Prince of Wales, for a supply of troops to make a descent on Ireland ; and in order the more effectually to procure his aid, he assured the Prince that he had a considerable party in the island who resented the injustice of his sentence ; and who waited only for his coming with a few soldiers to rise in arms for his revenge. The Prince, who was one of the greatest heroes of his age, and being naturally fond of warlike expeditions, lent a favourable ear to the application of MAC CONN ; and getting together a numerous army of all nations who were willing to enlist under his banner, he put them on board his transports, and landed them on the Irish coast. They were no sooner disembarked, than they sent a herald to the Monarch ; requiring him either to resign the government immediately, or to give them battle, and decide the quarrel by the sword. From this circumstance it is that we must conjecture, that the sentence of banishment was enforced, if not wholly pronounced by the Irish Monarch.

The King had scarcely heard of the invasion
U 3 when

when he received the challenge : and though he was greatly surprized at this bold and insolent demand, yet it roused him out of his melancholy ; and he prepared with the utmost expedition to drive them out of the island. To this end he summoned OLLIOLL OLOM with all his forces out of Munster, who had been the principal cause of this rebellion, and sent orders to the General of the militia to bring him all the succour that was in his power. OLLIOLL obeyed the summons with great alacrity ; and having entered into the closest connexion of politics and interest with the sons of CONARY the second, whose sister he had married, he called them to his assistance against the rebellion of MAC CONN his son-in-law, and their nephew ; who was abetted in it by NEMETH the murderer of their father. The young Princes being determined to revenge his death, came readily into the measures of the King of Munster ; and they joined the Monarch ARTHUR with all their forces. But FINN the General of the militia [b] was seduced or bribed from his allegiance, by the Prince of Wales, and the rebel ; and not only refused to attend the King himself in the expedition, but prevailed upon several of the Officers under him to get out of the way on the day of battle. The melancholy spirit of the Monarch however having been roused, he was not discouraged at this treachery of his General ; and having pronounced a solemn curse upon him as a traitor to the crown, he led his army against the enemy.

But so great was the faction at that time in the family of CONN KEDCATHACH, that a brother of OLLIOLL OLOM took the side of the invaders, as well as NEMETH who had married a sister of OLLIOLL'S Queen and relict of the Monarch CONARY the

[b] This is the hero so much celebrated in the poems of Ossian, corruptly called FINGAL and falsely said there to be a Caledonian chief, &c.

the Second. The rebel army, though consisting of foreigners of several nations, was by the conduct and vigilance of the Prince of Wales their chief commander, under the exactest discipline; and they waited for the King to begin the attack. When the two armies engaged, each side fought with so much fury, that the victory was doubtful for some hours. At length the brother of OLLIOLL had the good fortune to kill the King, which so dispirited his troops that they instantly fled from the field of battle; and it was not in the power of the Princes who fought round him to recover them from their pannick. The rebel MAC CONN, and his auxiliary the Prince of Wales, knew how to take their advantage, and a most dreadful carnage of some of the bravest troops in the kingdom ensued; as they gave no quarter and put all they met with to the sword. Among the slain, besides the Monarch, were the King of Connaught his ally, and seven of the sons of OLLIOLL OLOM, who had the same mother with MAC CONN the rebel chief, and were brought up together with him from their infancy. But a spirit of faction, regardless of all ties human and divine, is deaf to the calls of nature as well as humanity, and transforms men into brutes.

The victory over the Irish Monarch in the field ^{MAC} of battle being thus compleat, ^{CONN.} MAC CONN pursued ^{A.D. 259.} his success; and in the compass of a week had so thoroughly subdued his enemies, that he took quiet possession of the throne of Ireland, and was the third Prince of the race of ITH that had ever arrived at that high honour. In all probability it was an honour to which he would not have aspired, nor succeeded in if he had, had it not been for the revenge which the punishment of his crimes impelled him to take, and the power which he acquired fortunately by taking it. But a thousand instances occur of enemies doing the work of friends, and of

artful men producing honour out of disgrace. So vain is human foresight, and so mysterious and overruling are the ways of heaven ! The proper name of this successful Monarch was LUGAD ; but his surname of MAC CONN was that by which he was most usually distinguished. After a short and unquiet reign of three years, as he was distributing his liberality to the poets and artists of the island, he was insidiously killed with a spear, by the contrivance of CORMAC the son of ARTHUR in resentment of the rebellion against his father. From this MAC CONN descended several noble families in Munster, and the MAC CATHLINS, now CAMPBELLS, Dukes of Argyle in Scotland.

I have just mentioned the sons of CONARY the second as joining the forces of OLLIOLL OLOM. The history obliges me now to be more particular in the account of one of them, ACHY RIADA, that is the " long armed ;" who being a Prince of great ambition and of an active genius, was permitted by OLLIOLL OLOM his relation to raise such forces among the Degad race in Munster as were willing to follow his fortune, in order to gain a settlement in the province of Ulster. FERGUS at that time King of the province, and originally of the same family with ACHY RIADA, favoured his pretensions ; and by these assistances he soon wrested the North-East parts of Ulster from the Irians, and settled there with the people that followed him out of Munster. Hence the acquisition thus made took the name of Dal Riada : but this was not sufficient to satisfy the restless temper of ACHY. Being in sight of a country over against him, where probably several Irish clans inhabited at that time, he made a descent upon it with a considerable force ; and either through friendship or through fear obtained that country from the British Picts, which for many ages was known by the name of the
" Albanian

“Albanian Dalriada.” This, according to the best historians, was the first nominal settlement of the Scots in Britain; and this account is confirmed by our venerable BEDÉ himself; who, as Bishop STILLINGFLEET observes, was very inquisitive into these affairs.

The Monarch MAC CONN being treacherously slain, as I said, by the instigation of CORMAC, it FERGUS. is proper that I should give the reader some account A.D. 253. of the latter; who is soon to make a principal figure in this history. For it was not immediately upon the death of MAC CONN that he mounted the throne of Ireland: For FERGUS, who was distinguished by the name of the “Black Teeth”, of the Heremonian line, was first elected to that honour in the following manner. On the death of MAC CONN, CORMAC having secured the succession, as he imagined, made a great entertainment in Ulster for the King and chiefs of that province. But FERGUS aspiring himself to the Monarchy of the island, and having two brothers with him who were men of daring spirit and resolution, they contrived to set a mark of public ignominy upon CORMAC, and then to drive him out of the province. To this end when he was doing the honours of his entertainment, an officer belonging to FERGUS put a lighted candle to CORMAC’s face and burnt his beard; and it was with the utmost difficulty, with the help of some of his guests who were sitting round him, that he escaped this attempt upon him and got away into Connaught. The King of Ulster having thus disgraced and driven away the candidate for the Monarchy, set himself up; and after two battles, in which two of the sons of OLLIOLL OLOM were slain, he went to Tara and was enthroned sovereign of the island.

But the glory of FERGUS was of a very short duration; and his fate is a lesson to Princes, how unsafe

unsafe it is to provoke a man of rank and spirit by a public personal ignominy, which of all injuries is the last that is forgotten. CORMAC, enflamed to the highest degree with this insult, breathed nothing but revenge against the whole house of FERGUS : and that his resolution might become effectual, he applied himself to the remaining heads of the OLLIOLL OLOM family his relations, who had still great authority and interest in the island. LUGAD LAGA the brother of OLLIOLL, in order to wipe off the infamy of his revolt against the Monarch ARTHUR, whom, as the reader may remember, he slew in battle, came readily into the measures of his son CORMAC ; and proved himself in the event a very faithful and successful ally. To these invincible heroes joined THADY, a grandson of OLLIOLL OLOM ; whose father was overthrown in battle by the reigning Monarch, and who was therefore easily induced to enter into the confederacy. CORMAC having strengthened himself in this manner within a year after his disgrace, resolved to seek out the Monarch and his two brothers, and to give them battle. The reader will excuse me if I omit the fictitious embellishments of this part of the history, and relate only the simple fact of LUGAD'S having cut off the heads of the three brothers with his own hand in this battle, and of THADY'S putting the whole army of the enemy into confusion, and pursuing them with a terrible slaughter. The victory being thus compleat, and the Monarchy become vacant by the death of FERGUS, it was no difficult matter for CORMAC, with the help of such allies, to ascend the throne of Ireland : and as he gave a lustre to this Monarchy which it had never known before, and established it on a new footing, so I think it will be proper that his reign should give a beginning to another book.

THE

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
I R E L A N D.

B O O K V.

CORMAC the son of ARTHUR and grandson of CONN, and therefore distinguished in history by the name of CORMAC
 O CONN, having possessed himself of the crown, rewarded THADY for his assistance with several lands on the banks of the river Liffy : but according to KEATING, he was guilty of the most infamous ingratitude ; and THADY conquered these territories by dint of arms. This however is supported by so strange a tale as gives an air of fiction to the whole ; and I choose rather to follow the authority of O FLAHERTY, whose account is more agreeable to the acknowledged character of this Monarch.

Not

CORMAC
A.D. 254.
MS.
KEATING.
O FLAHERTY.
COMERY.
LYNCH.
Dissertat.

Not that CORMAC is to be cleared of all acts of violence, though he was as just and wise a Prince as had ever reigned in Ireland : but his prudence would prevent the ingratitude which is charged upon him towards a man whose power had principally contributed to his exaltation ; and who could therefore disturb, if he could not dethrone him. The author who makes this report to his disadvantage, allows that he was “ a Prince of the most consummate wisdom, understood perfectly the maxims of government, and was the most accomplished statesman of the age.” Strange that a man who says this of CORMAC, should at the same time relate for real history, that when he saw the dreadful condition in which THADY was with the wounds he had acquired when fighting on his side, he ordered a surgeon to inclose an ear of barley in one, to bind up a black worm in another, and to conceal the point of a rusty spear in a third ; in order to torture him with more pain, and in the end to affect his life. The reader will excuse my not giving him the whole tale, as it is too ridiculous to insert ; and for the same reason I must omit another relating to the King’s marriage with EITHNE, the foster-daughter of a wealthy herdsman in the province of Leinster. These are tales which suited the ignorance and the customs of the age in which they were originally recorded, but which ought not to hold a place in authentic history.

As soon as CORMAC was in full and quiet possession of the throne of Ireland, he applied himself with great assiduity to revise the ancient laws of the kingdom ; that he might abolish those which were inconvenient or absurd, retain those which were useful, and establish others which were accommodated to the temper and genius of the people he was to govern. This is a lesson to Princes and states of modern times, which, as they are more enlight-
ened,

ened, it is shamefull that they are yet to learn : and it shews either want of spirit, want of attention, or want of genius in the Prince and people, to be governed by laws and customs introduced so many hundred years ago, that they are become usefess, inconvenient, and, the meaning of them being not understood, ridiculous. The Irish Monarch had too much wisdom and resolution to permit laws and customs to have authority, merely because they had been such; unless they were still of use, and adapted to the manners of the age he lived in. He considered very wisely, that as it was impossible from the nature of human constitutions that any one should be in every respect compleat, so it was next to impossible that it should continue long to retain even that compleatness which it had at first.

He saw that length of time, improvement of observation, and change of circumstances to which every state is subject, either made alterations necessary, or caused great inconvenience for the want of them. Therefore like a true friend to his country, he meditated and effected such alterations in its laws and customs, as the nature of the constitution, and the circumstances of the times required. Nor did he confine these changes, as we shall see presently, to civil affairs, but he extended them to religion. In short his sentiments were too enlarged, and his intentions of good to his kingdom were too sincere and generous, to permit the motives, which tie the tongues and the hands of men in power in our days, to dissuade him from the alterations which he thought necessary to the beauty or the strength of the constitution : and though they dignify these motives with the appellation of reasons of state—the wretched subterfuge of shallow politicians—yet if the mask were pulled off, they would be found to proceed only from indolence, or cowardice, or poorness of spirit. None of those had any
place

place in CORMAC'S temper of mind; and therefore he made it his business to introduce every improvement that he could devise, without regard to forms of ancient usage. The ordinances which he established for the public good, which are yet to be seen it seems in the old parchment records, and which shew his great skill in the laws and antiquities of his country, were never abolished whilst the Irish affairs had any existence.

Besides the alterations that he made in the laws and public customs beforementioned, he supported the royal dignity with a state and grandeur far surpassing all that had gone before him. The palace of Midchuarta, where he entertained the ambassadors of foreign princes and the nobility of the island, was enlarged and beautified by this Monarch: the length of which is said to have been about four hundred and fifty feet, about fourscore in breadth, and the height about fifty. In the middle of the state room hung a lanthorn of prodigious size and most curious workmanship; and the lodging apartments were furnished with an hundred and fifty beds, besides the bed of state in which the King himself usually lay. There never had been a Monarch on the throne of Ireland who was attended with such a retinue. He had an hundred and fifty of the most distinguished champions of the kingdom as the yeomen of his guard, to wait upon his person, and to serve him, especially at his table when he dined in public; where he had a large side-board of gold as well as silver plate. The household troops, who were in constant duty, consisted of a thousand and fifty of the flower of the Irish army: and the other ensigns and distinctions of royalty which he had about him, which were equal to the dignity of the greatest princes at that time, made the court of this Monarch famous throughout the world. What added something to its lustre was his
numerous

numerous issue ; Three sons of great renown in arms, and ten daughters of distinguished beauty and accomplishments.

BUT CORMAC, whose soul was filled with a desire of glory, was not content with mere domestic grandeur. He sent a great fleet into North-Britain, which infesting the coast for three years together acquired the government in Albania. He defeated the people of Munster in many signal overthrows, and obliged them to retire within their borders. In order to transfer to the rising generation the same sort of erudition and accomplishments which he had acquired himself, he opened three schools at Tara ; one for instruction in military discipline, a second to teach history, and the other for jurisprudence, or institutes of the laws. From this college was produced the book which is called the " Psalter of Tara ;" in which the archives of the country were collected ; the series of their Monarchs and provincial Kings preserved ; their own times compared with the principal foreign events synchronising with them ; the tributes and subsidies of the provincialists due to the Monarchs recorded ; and the measure or particular limits of every country, from the province to the district, from the district to the village, and from village to village were ascertained. In this manner did CORMAC consult the grandeur and glory of his administration, and the peace and happiness of his people. In short, in the magnificence of his court, in his benevolence, his prudence, his erudition, and in the fame of his great achievements, he far exceeded all the Monarchs of Ireland that had gone before him.

To what has been already related of the splendour in which he lived, it must be added that he prescribed as a law to himself and his successors in the throne, that every Monarch should have always in his retinue continually attendant upon him, one
of

of the principal nobility, a Druid who was also an Augur, a Judge, a Physician, a Poet, an Antiquary, a Musician, and three officers of his household. The duty of the Nobleman was to be a companion to the King, and to entertain him with conversation suitable to his rank on affairs of state: The business of the Druid was to regulate the concerns of religion, to offer sacrifices, and to divine, or at least pretend to do so, upon all public events: The office of the Judge was to administer justice to the subjects, to publish the laws and customs of the country, and to preside in the courts of judicature in extraordinary cases under the King, who was usually present himself on such occasions: The Physician was to take care of the health of the King and Queen and their children, and to administer medicines to the household: The poet was to transmit to posterity the great heroic actions of famous men of whatever quality and condition, to compose satires upon immorality, and to lash the personal vices of courtiers, and such as were within their knowledge, without partiality and affection: The office of the Antiquary was to preserve the genealogies of the Kings, to correct the regal tables of succession, and to deliver down the pedigrees of every collateral branch of the royal family. He had likewise authority to supervise the genealogies of the nobility, military officers, and gentry, to record the signal heroic deeds of any of them in battle, and to register them in the public archives of the kingdom. The business of the Musician was to play upon his instruments and sing before the King; when his Majesty had an inclination to lay aside the care of state affairs, and to relax and unbend his mind: The three officers of the household were to provide for his table, to wait upon the Monarch when he eat in public, to govern the inferior officers and servants of the household, and

and when they were guilty of any offence to dismiss or punish them. These regulations, for the support of the royal dignity and magnificence, were strictly observed for many ages after by his successors, without any addition or alteration ; except in the room of a Druid, after the introduction of Christianity, a Bishop was made confessor to the Monarch.

I have said in the beginning of the reign of CORMAC, that he was not to be cleared of all acts of violence, though he has the character of as just and as wise a Monarch as ever ruled in Ireland ; and the following anecdote in his history will justify what I said. The revenues of the crown being not sufficient to maintain such a numerous family as he had, and the magnificence in which he lived, he advised with his treasurer to whom this was known, in what manner he might relieve himself from this distress, and continue to support his usual splendour. A man must be very unfit for the employment of a courtier, that cannot devise expedients to extricate his master out of any difficulties ; especially when he is backed with power to carry them into execution. The treasurer of CORMAC, like other ministers, considering the King's necessities and his will, more than what is reasonable and the law of right, immediately suggested to him, that as there were properly two provinces of Munster, and his majesty received tribute but from one, he should demand it for the other ; and in case of refusal, march his army into it, and levy the tribute with his troops.

The treasurer's advice, so agreeable to the King's situation and present sentiments, was no sooner given than taken. CORMAC instantly made a demand of the tribute from the King of Munster, which had been detained from him, he said, unjustly, and a great arrear was due. To this demand, which was received with as much contempt as sur-

prize, the King of Munster replied, that none of the Monarchs of Ireland had ever required an additional tribute from the province, on account of an old division that had been made of it, and he would not distress his subjects by raising new contributions which they had no right to pay. The Monarch, being incensed with this bold refusal, took the other part of his minister's advice; and with great expedition marched his army into the province of Munster, where he encamped. The provincial King, being not unprepared, sat down with his forces in the sight of CORMAC's camp, not fearing to try the issue of a battle with him.

Into this story there is foisted a very wondrous tale of the skill and enchantments of the Druids in each army; in order, no doubt, to possess their countrymen with an high opinion and esteem of the power and importance of their holy leaders, as well as to enliven the history with wonder and surprize. At the same time therefore, that we acquit the Bard who invented it in that age of darkness and superstition, we must condemn Dr. KEATING who relates it to us in these days for serious history. Indeed his relating it to us from the ancient records has answered one end; for which we ought to forgive him: it has furnished us with a proof, from the history of Ireland itself, of the antiquity of that history, and of the existence of letters before the introduction of Christianity. For though in the time of Druidism, it was natural to take every opportunity of displaying the power of that order, yet this was absurd and inconsistent in Christian Annalists, and could not therefore be foisted in by them; nor the history be the production of later ages, as our candid criticks all seem to contend.

But

But laying the whole fable aside, what remains of the real story is only this : that the King of Munster being encouraged greatly by his troops, drew them out and offered battle to the Monarch of Ireland ; who distrusting the courage or fidelity of his army, retreated in great disorder, and with the utmost precipitation, without striking a blow. He was however pursued so closely by the Memonians, that he was overtaken, and obliged to capitulate in order to save himself from destruction. He delivered up hostages immediately of some of the chief of his nobility, 'till he had repaired all the losses the people of Munster had sustained from the depredations of his army, during the time they were in the province. In this dishonourable manner ended the expedition of CORMAC into Munster ; from whence the reader will learn, how little sovereign power the Monarchs of Ireland, either had, or could exercise over the provincial Kings. He may learn also, that when ministers advise, and Princes pursue measures disagreeable to their subjects, without a certainty of success, disgrace and disaffection will be the consequence.

Not long after this defeat, it happened that a person of the first distinction in the kingdom had upon some account or other --not related--fallen into the displeasure of the Monarch of Ireland. Great application was made to restore him again to favour, but in vain. The King remained deaf to all entreaties, till ANGUS, of the royal line, not only interceded for the delinquent, but also offered to become a surety for his fidelity and good conduct in the time to come. The King was moved with the intercession of his favourite ANGUS, and consented to accept of the conditions offered. But this reconciliation, so much desired in general at the court of CORMAC, was very disagreeable to

one of his sons ; a Prince of strong passions and of very little desert.

What the grounds of his hatred were we are not informed ; but regardless of his father's honour and of his own royal birth, the first time that the chief who had been in disgrace appeared at court, under the sanction of CORMAC's pardon, the Prince caused violent hands to be laid upon him, and put out both his eyes. So mean a piece of treachery, in the son of a King whose forgiveness had been announced, must necessarily rouse the spirit of ANGUS who had become responsible for his friend ; and who had consequently, in the reconciliation that he had procured, the honour of the Monarch for his safe-conduct. No sooner therefore was he informed of the baseness and barbarity exercised upon his friend, and perhaps suspecting the King himself to have been concerned in it, than he summoned all the forces he had any interest in, and with more resentment than prudence marched instantly to Tara, to chastise the insolence of the Prince, and to do justice to his injured friend.

Whether we suppose CORMAC to have connived at the perfidy of his son or not—for the history is silent in this point---yet we may suppose that he was alarmed at such a precipitate rebellion in a favourite chief, as it was impossible to foresee what it might end in : and we are told, that he collected his troops with all possible expedition, in order to crush it before it should get to a head. But ANGUS, being enflamed with a thirst of vengeance, was too quick for the Monarch ; and in his first attempt of violence against the house of Tara, he slew the Prince with his lance as he stood by the side of his father ; and in the same rencounter, throwing his javelin at the head of the King, he struck out one of CORMAC's eyes. The Monarch, being rather

rather irritated than dismayed with these misfortunes, and having a good force about him, made a terrible slaughter of the troops of ANGUS; from which the chief himself escaped with difficulty. He was obliged afterwards to take refuge, with his two brothers his confederates, in the court of OLLIOLL OLUUM their relation, at that time King of Munster.

Though CORMAC had thus totally suppressed the rebellion that had been raised against him, yet ^{CARBR. II} having lost one of his eyes, and it not being thought ^{A.D. 279.} decent or propitious in those days for any man to be a Monarch who had a personal blemish, he was contented to deliver up the reins of government, and to retire to a mean little house at Anacoil, in the neighbourhood of the palace of Tara. In this retirement he spent the remainder of his life, which lasted several years; more happy in himself undoubtedly than amidst all his grandeur and cares of state; and perhaps not less a friend and benefactor to his people than when he swayed the sceptre. For CORMAC, who was the greatest philosopher of their nation, was perhaps the greatest legislator of all their Kings: And to a man of such a turn of mind, it could not be mortifying nor uneasy, to lay down the hurry and the pomp of royalty, which he must be sated enough with in three and twenty years. On the other hand we may suppose, that it was pleasing to him to enjoy that privacy and leisure, which were adapted to such studies as his genius and inclinations favoured.

Here it was therefore that he drew up "a Book of Advice to Kings," for the use of his son CARBRY then his successor on the throne; which KEATING and O FLAHERTY mention as extant in their time; and of which the former says, "that it was such a testimony of CORMAC's learning and political

cal knowledge, as is worthy to be inscribed in golden characters, for the information of Princes, and as a perfect standard of policy to all ages." In this retirement, he also wrote a book relating to crimes against the laws; and assisted in a larger work which treated of the measure of obedience due to Kings; of wardships, patronages, and privileged places; of the punishment of offenders in the case of blood; and of the forms in which all sorts of pacts and treaties should be reduced into writing. Another part of this work was wrote by CORMAC and revised and added to by his son, and treats of several laws concerning sea and land [a.] Will it be any longer doubted after this whether the ancient native Irish had any philosophy, literature, or arts in their pagan state? Will any criticks in this country any longer confidently assert, that the Irish had not the use of letters 'till after the arrival of St. PATRICK, and the conversion of the island to Christianity? ought we not rather to take shame to ourselves, that we have hitherto always treated that ancient people with such illiberal contempt; who had the start of the Britons for many ages, in arts and sciences, in learning and in laws?

Important as such subjects as these were in themselves and useful to the state, yet these were not the only subjects which employed the great mind of CORMAC. In the leisure which he enjoyed after his retreat from government, he had an opportunity of giving an unbounded scope to his inquisitive genius; and from studying and observing the ways of men, he

[a] These books, it is well known, were with many others, more ancient as well as modern, relating to their laws, in the collection of Mr. MACPHERBESS of the county of Sligo; who fell a sacrifice to party rage, in the year sixteen hundred and seventy, and whose papers had not a better fate.

he was naturally led to contemplate on the works of God. With the parts and learning that he was possessed of, it was no wonder that he should discover the errors of paganism ; though it was the religion of his country in which he had been educated, and hitherto acquiesced in. As soon as he had convinced himself of the existence of one supreme, omnipotent, and eternal being, he openly exclaimed against the corruptions of the Druids, and their absurd and ridiculous systems of polytheism. He banished all the rites and instruments of idolatry from his house, and applied himself with zeal to improve in the discovery that he had thus happily made. But as this was laying the axe to the root, and directly striking at the authority and the temporal interest of the Druids, so it is easy to conjecture, that the whole order would take the alarm.

Though CORMAC was no longer the monarch of Ireland, yet his influence among the people, whom he had ruled so many years with the greatest ability, must be as considerable as ever ; and as his son then filled the throne and would probably imbibe his notions, so it was to be feared, that by violence or persuasion, the religion of the country would be overturned ; and if their lives were spared in the first emotions of zeal, which was the best they had to hope for, yet that the order would be extinguished, and their power with it. Under these apprehensions, which were certainly not ill founded, they exerted all their skill to recover CORMAC ; and since he refused to come to the worship of the golden calf which they had set up, they brought the idol to him.

Having received intelligence of the time which he used to set apart for his devotions, some of the chief Druids brought it into his presence, and according to their usual custom fell down before it ; paying

divine honour to it, and entreating CORMAC to join with them. But the King was not to be moved. They demanded therefore to know the reason why he would not continue in the religion of his ancestors, and why he refused to conform to the established worship of the golden calf? he answered, that it was unworthy of a rational being to adore a brute, and much more a log of wood that was fashioned by the workman, who was surely less able to make a God than to create himself; and therefore that he should direct his devotion to that omnipotent and invisible being who made both the workman and the tree.

Having no reply ready to this reasoning, the idol was conveyed away in sullen silence; and upon an after-thought was brought again, dressed out in the most splendid magnificent robes, and ornamented with the richest jewels. The King was then desired to look upon it, and no longer to refuse his worship of a deity thus sumptuously arrayed, and which was the God his fathers had worshipped in that island. But CORMAC had convinced himself of the absurdities of Idolatry, upon principles of reason too just and solid to be shook with their superstitious folly: And had he lived but a little longer, it is probable that Paganism would have been extinct in Ireland before the introduction of Christianity, and that the original theology and patriarchal worship would have been restored. But in the evening of that day on which this conversation passed, he was choaked with a bone of the salmon which he had for his supper.

There is nothing marvellous at all in such a death, as the reader must acknowledge: but in order to support the truth of Paganism, to extinguish the errors of CORMAC, and to illustrate the divine authority of the Druids, all the records assure us, that this was effected by their enchantments; though

though some of them say, that infernal fiends were raised by the power of the Pagan priests, who set upon the King and strangled him. This is another internal proof of the truth and antiquity of this history, and that it is not the work of later ages. Neither is it to be wondered at, that such a tale should impose upon the Pagan Irish in those days of darkness, when KEATING relates it for matter of fact. In this manner ended the life of the great CORMAC O'CON; who brought philosophy, law, and learning in Ireland, to as high a pitch perhaps as Heathen lights could afford: And though he did not live long enough to propagate Theism among his countrymen, yet the report of his defection from the established faith had caused doubts and scruples in the minds of many; which were probably continued through succeeding generations, and so helped to pave the way for the introduction of Christianity. There is a short character given of CORMAC, in an ancient manuscript of undoubted authenticity, as I am informed, which confirms all that has been said of him; and which, though it falls short of the eloquence and energy of the original, may be thus translated. "CORMAC was magnificent in his liberality: he excelled as a governor, and as a philosopher: a most equitable judge in public; in private a friend, a companion."

In a work of this kind, it would be unpardonable to omit an account of the Irish Militia, so much celebrated in other nations and histories; and in the reign of CORMAC, this body of heroes was in the height of their glory and military renown. The name of their chief commander was FINN, the son of COMHALL, mentioned above, who married a daughter of the Monarch's: but this being a gay lady, or it may be having given her heart before to
another

another hero, she soon made an elopement with him, and the lovers ended their days in wretchedness and obscurity. Such will always be the fate of connexions that are formed against reason, truth, and honour: and yet so deceitful is the human heart, that scarcely any thing but experience can teach us not to prefer what gladdens it for the present, to what would afterwards afford us a much more real pleasure. The daughter of CORMAC having behaved in a manner so unworthy of herself, her family, and her husband, the King, having another still unmarried, bestowed her upon FINN, as a recompence for her sister's infidelity, with whom he enjoyed all the pleasures of a connubial and domestic life. From this hero, so renowned for philosophy as well as arms, the military corps which he commandod took the name of "Fiana Erion;" and these were the trained bands or standing army of the kingdom.

Many places in the island retain to this day the names of some of the leaders of this famous body of men: and whole volumes of poetical fictions have been grafted upon their exploits. KEATING owns that these sonnets were not intended for real history, but to enliven the work and relieve the reader: The manuscript which I have, after giving a particular account of FINN's descent, his inheritance, his acquisitions from the King of Leinster, and his great military command, immediately adds, "but the reader must not expect to meet here with such stories of him and his heroes as the vulgar Irish have—for they are no other than commanders which their poets penned in after days in their names—but only what I find mentioned of them in their histories." The words of the writer are given for the sake of accuracy; and it is easy to gather from them, that the names of FINN and his heroes having been much celebrated by tradition, some of the

the Bards who lived when these days of heroism were over, took the names of these champions for the heroes of their sonnets [b]. It would however be very unjust, and contrary to the candour allowed always to such ancient writings, nay it would be contrary to criticism, to reject the authority of the whole relation, on account of some poetical fictions that were only intended to embellish it. Let us turn then to the history of this military establishment; and there are few things at this ancient period in the Irish chronicles which are more worthy of notice.

The constant number of this standing army in times of peace, when there were no disturbances at home, nor any want of their assistance to their allies abroad, were nine thousand men, divided equally into three battalions. But in case of any apprehensions of a conspiracy or rebellion against the Monarch, or if there was any necessity for transporting a body of troops to Scotland in order to defend their allies the Dailriadas, it was in the power of FINN, the Generalissimo, to encrease his forces to seven battalions of three thousand each. Every battalion was commanded by a Colonel; every hundred men by a Captain; an officer in the nature of a Lieutenant was set over every fifty; and a Serjeant resembling the Decurio of the Romans was at the head of every five and twenty. When they were drawn out for action, every hundred men

[b] The epic poem called Fingal, and published in 1763, was probably composed in this manner, and mutilated after by the Caledonians, in order to give the honour of its heroes to their own country; or originally composed by a Caledonian Bard with the same intent. Innumerable fables of FINN and his heroes—such as these which are called OSSIAN'S—perhaps not so well and so artfully worked up, abound still among the descendants of that famous people, which yet every one of common sense could distinguish from their chronicles and other monuments of real story.

men were distributed into ten files, with ten of course in each ; and the leader of the file gave the word to the other nine. As it was thought a great honour to be a member of this invincible body of troops, their General was very strict in the qualifications which he insisted upon as essential to an admission in it. These qualifications appear exaggerated by the historians, to a degree of the marvellous, if not impossible ; neither are they related clear of confusion and ambiguity. The reader may take the following as the most authentic.

The parents or near relations of every candidate for the militia, were to give security that they would not attempt to revenge his death, but leave it to his fellow soldiers to do him justice. He must have a poetical genius, and be well acquainted at least with the twelve books of poetry. He was to stand at the distance of nine ridges of land with only a stick and target, and nine soldiers were to throw their javelins at him at once, from which he was to defend himself unhurt, or be rejected. He was to run through a wood with his hair platted, pursued by a company of the militia, the breadth of a tree only being allowed before them at setting out, without being overtaken or his hair falling loose about him. He was to have a strong arm, and to be able to hold his weapons steady without shaking. He was to leap over a tree as high as his forehead, and easily stoop under another that was as low as his knees. These qualifications being proved, he was then to take an oath of allegiance to the King, and of fidelity to FINN his commander in chief.

The reader will judge of the propriety of most of these qualifications ; but this was not every thing that was required, in order for an admission into this illustrious corps. Every soldier, it is said, before he was enrolled, was obliged to subscribe the following articles.

articles. That if ever he was disposed to marry, he would not conform to the mercenary custom of requiring a portion with his wife : but without regard to her fortune, he would choose a woman for her virtue, her courtesy and good manners : That he would never offer violence to a woman, or attempt to ravish her : That he would be charitable and relieve the poor who desired meat and drink, as far as his abilities would permit : And that he would not turn his back, nor refuse to fight with nine men of any other nation that should set upon him and offer him violence. These were the terms of being a soldier in the militia of Ireland under FINN ; and whilst these were insisted upon and observed, the body was invincible ; a terror to rebels at home, and to enemies abroad.

In the times of profound peace, they were required to defend the inhabitants against the attempts of thieves and robbers ; to quell riots and insurrections ; to levy fines, and secure estates that were forfeited for the use of the crown ; in short to suppress all seditions and traitorous practices in their beginning ; and to appear under arms when any breach of the peace or emergencies of the state required it. They had no subsistence money from the Monarchs but during the winter half year, when they were billeted upon the country and dispersed in quarters. During the other part of the year, from the first of May to November, they were encamped about the fields, and were obliged to fish and hunt for their support. This was not only a great ease to the Monarch and his subjects, but it inured the troops to fatigue, preserved them in health and vigour, and accustomed them to lie abroad in the field : and in a country which abounded so much with venison, fish, and fowl as Ireland did, it was no other hardship than was proper to the life of soldiers, to be obliged to draw their subsistence

sistence in the summer season from those articles.

They made but one meal in four and twenty hours, which was always in an evening; and besides the common method of roasting their meat before the fire, they had another, very remarkable, which they seem most to have practised. The places which they chose to encamp in were always in the neighbourhood of water; where great fires were made in order to heat some large stones for soddening of their meat. Here large pits were dug, into which they threw a layer of stones when they were red hot, and then a layer of flesh covered up in sedges or rushes; then another course of stones and another of flesh, 'till the pit was full, or their quantity of meat was finished. While their food was stewing in this manner, they washed their heads and necks and other parts of their bodies, 'till they had cleansed themselves from the sweat and dust occasioned by their hunting; and this contributed as much to take off their fatigue as it did to promote their health and cleanliness. When they were dressed, and their meat was ready, they began their meal by uncovering the pits and taking out their food; of which they eat very large quantities with great cheerfulness and sociability.

If their exercise had led them, as it often did, to too great a distance to return to their camp, as soon as dinner was ended they erected little temporary tents or booths, in which their beds were laid out and constructed with great exactness. Next the ground were placed the smallest branches of trees, upon which was strewed a large quantity of moss from some of the adjacent woods or bogs, and over all were strewed bundles of rushes which made a very commodious lodging; and which in the old manuscripts are called "the three beds of the Irish militia". The marks of their fires, continue deep in

in the earth in many parts of the island to this day : and when the husbandman turns up any black burnt earth with his plow, as they often do, he immediately knows the occasion of it ; and even now that soil is called by the name of "Fulacht Finn." The militia were as much' under discipline when encamped thus in the summer as when they were in quarters ; and they were at stated times obliged to perform their military exercise. Besides these regulations for the army, the celebrated FINN, who was as great a philosopher as a general, drew up several axioms of jurisprudence, which were incorporated into the celestial judgments for the government of the state. I shall now resume the thread of the narration.

Though CORMAC lived seven years after he had resigned the crown, yet I chose to give the history of him entire till his death, as it was but short, rather than to break it into pieces ; especially since it was unconnected, and the different dates, if they could have been ascertained, would be totally immaterial. Whether this Monarch insisted upon his son's succeeding him in the throne, or whether he waved his pretensions in favour of ACHY GUNAD, the history does not inform us : it only tells us that he was his successor, and before the end of the year that he was assassinated, when CARBRY LIFFECAR the son of CORMAC became Monarch of Ireland. But what the historians have left in this obscurity my manuscript hath cleared up. It is there said, that CORMAC resigned the reigns of government to his son, who executed the kingly office 'till the death of his father ; [when ACHY GUNAD of the line of HEREMON, assumed the crown, which he possessed about a year. This account has all the appearance of probability, and it is not contradicted by any of those which are printed.

How

How it happened that **CARBRY** had not interest or power enough to retain the crown at his father's death, which he had been in possession of at least as a deputy for seven years, all accounts are silent. But perhaps it is a conjecture authorised by the times and their form of government, that **ACHY** was the *Roydamna* chose, in the life of **CORMAC**, to be his successor on the throne; and this conjecture will solve the difficulty. We must however be content with what we meet with: and though the secret motives and springs of action are the life of history, yet these are not to be looked for in old annals; which—as I have said in the Preface—were only portable extracts made from the larger works in their archives, easily to be circulated, and frequently copied, and have been therefore preserved through all revolutions. The reasons of state which determine the actions of princes, or their private passions which perhaps do it much more frequently, are sometimes to be collected from the ruling manners, the genius of the times, or some prominent figures, which enable us to trace the rest: and where this is done, without refinements unsupported by facts, it distinguishes the historian from the annalist; but where it cannot be done, though the historian may be pitied, yet he is not to be blamed. We are now in one of those conjectures; and the reader must therefore take things as he finds them.

A. D. 279 To whatsoever cause it was owing that **CARBRY** **LIFFECAE** did not continue to hold the reigns of government which he had in his hands at the death of his father, it is very certain that he resumed them within a year, when **ACHY GUNAD** was killed. The philosophical education which **CORMAC** had given his son was not without effect. He revised the books of laws, improved, and added to them: neither in his personal conduct did he shew himself unworthy

unworthy of his great descent. In the reign of this Monarch, the Irish had first the name of Scots, and their country Scotia, given them by the Britons; the reason of which has been assigned in the Introduction: and notwithstanding the several attempts of many historians of North Britain, to prove these names to be meant of their first progenitors, yet their best writers allow, that their descent and origine was from Ireland; and that their own country was called "Scotia minor" to distinguish it from Ireland, which had the name of "Scotia major." Notwithstanding the great qualifications and the prudent administration of the reigning Monarch, yet he was not without his troubles. After the death of FINN, the great General of the Militia, his family fell into great dissensions; probably on a competition for that command, because his father and grandfather had it before him. But this is only conjecture. The one side had a powerful ally in the King of Connaught, and the other side, at the head of which was OSSIAN the son of FINN, was protected by his sister's husband, the King of Munster.

Whatever was the occasion of their difference, it raged with great violence for several years, and at last produced a civil war. The Ossian faction, for some reason or other, had revolted from the Monarch, who made the King of Connaught his General; and therefore CARBRY, tho' OSSIAN was his nephew, took the side against him. The quarrel was too great, notwithstanding their near alliances, to be decided any other way than by arms; which each side prepared for with their utmost force. The fatal battle was joined at Gabra, in which the Monarch was slain and the King of Connaught wounded on one side; and the King of Munster and OSCAR the son of OSSIAN were killed on the other. Thus fell CARBRY LIFFECAR, a wise and valiant Prince, after filling the throne of Ireland seventeen years with great honour. The two sons

of MAC-CÖNN succeeded him, reigning with equal power ; which the Antiquaries considering as an oligarchy, have excluded these heroes from the number of their Monarchs ; neither was their reign of a year's duration : for the younger brother fell by the hands of the elder, who did not chose a partner on the throne ; and the elder was soon deposed and slain in battle by the militia of the kingdom, as being of the line of ITH.

FIACH. II The successor to the crown, after this short interruption, was **FIACHA SRABTINE** the son of **CARBRY LIFFECAR** of the old Heremonian stock ;
A. D. 297 and who, notwithstanding some uneasinesses created him by his brother's sons, sat upon the throne of his ancestors thirty years. He had married a daughter of a Prince of Wales, by whom he had a son of eminent virtues and valour, and who in the life time of his father became a King of Connaught ; whose name was **MUREDACH TIREACH**. He discovered a military genius in his early youth : and having applied himself constantly to martial studies in times of peace, and taking the field upon all occasions in which the troops were employed in action, he soon acquired those abilities which experience can only teach ; and his renown was answerable to his merit. This acquired him the post of King of Connaught, as well as Generalissimo of his father's army. In this command he acquitted himself against the King of Munster, with equal capacity, bravery and success. The higher his reputation rose in arms, the more he became endeared to his father ; who did him all the honours, and gave him all the emoluments, that was in his power.

The favourite of a Monarch must necessarily have his enemies, let his merit be ever so great, or his conduct ever so unexceptionable ; and next to the station of a Monarch itself is of all stations in
 life

life the least to be envied. But if a favourite should be—as sometimes favourites have been—of no merit, of small abilities, and of a conduct haughty and reproachable, how much soever their creatures may flatter themselves, they will soon get a tumble, or their master must be content to perish with them. Of this we have many instances in the English history ; which shews us that nothing but their own experience will teach men to prefer their real good to the views of avarice or ambition. But in the case before us, the favourite was the Son of the Monarch ; not a subject equalled or surpassed by a hundred others in merit and pretensions ; a General of consummate abilities and unparalleled success, to whom the royal favour in its utmost extent, one would think, could not be repined at ; a General and a Prince too, who had very greatly served, if he had not absolutely saved the state : And yet what pains were taken to rob him of his fair fame, to misrepresent his best actions, and to exaggerate those that were the least prudent ! In short nothing less would satisfy his enemies than his own or his father's ruin.

FIACHA had reigned now thirty years in great tranquillity : and though we read of no great improvements made in law or government in his time, yet we read of no oppression nor misrule. Scenes of public action, conquest, and military glory, are indeed the scenes which enliven history the most of any ; but they are not the scenes in which wise and good men would choose to pass away their lives. It was greatly and humanely said by SCIPIO, that he had rather save the life of a single citizen than destroy a thousand enemies ; and the expression has been celebrated in all ages since. The reign of this Monarch therefore, though for the most part still and peaceful, yet was happy to himself and all his subjects. The great favour shewn his son, and the

prodigious honours which the Prince acquired, were objects of too much envy for wicked men to bear. At the head of their enemies were the three COLLA's sons of the Monarch's brother, to whom all the praises given to MUREDACH were as so many stabs in the heart; and of whose power, if he should succeed his father, they had no small apprehensions, on account of some indignities which in their malice they had put upon him. Animated with these sentiments they formed a conspiracy with some of the King's officers and other chiefs of their own train, to destroy the Monarch and his son and seize on the crown themselves. I omit the tale of a Druid's prophecy on this occasion; given evidently by the Irish Bard to raise their credit among the people, and copied by KEATING very gravely. The King being informed of the treachery of his nephews, and being then at the head of some of his troops, fought the enemy and gave them battle. But as the battle is not always to the strong nor favour to men of skill, so the Monarch lost his life, and the eldest COLLA succeeded him on the throne. The great merit, the fame, and the just pretensions of the Prince, who was extremely irritated at this conspiracy, made the throne uneasy to COLLA the whole time he possessed it. But at the end of four years, the Prince attacked him with such a superior force that he drove the three COLLA's and three hundred of their principal followers into Albania; their mother being a Princess of that country. This, I believe, is the first instance of a Monarch of Ireland being deposed without losing his life; and the reason of this we are not told in any other manner.

MURE-
DACH.

A. D. 331

The superior genius of MUREDACH having thus obtained him the full possession of the throne, he set himself about establishing the general tranquillity and the publick happiness. These he effected

fectcd with great success ; and his care of government was repaid in the reputation and esteem which he acquired among his people. Before three years were expired, the COLLA's, his kinsmen, who had rebelled against his father and been the occasion of his death, either tired of the court and country of Albania, or desiring to end their days in their native land, were determined to put every thing to the hazard as to their future lot. But in order to convince the Monarch that they came with no ill intention, but rather threw themselves upon his mercy, they were attended with less than thirty of their followers who had lived in exile with them. They no sooner landed on the Irish coast, than they marched directly to the palace where the Monarch had his residence. Having made a proper submission and acknowledgment of their fault, the King received them courteously, congratulated them on their return, and assured them that if their conduct merited his favour, they should find the good effects of it. For what was past, he told them, that as clemency was one of the brightest jewels in the crowns of Princes, he should forgive them, and leave their punishment to the Gods and their own reflection. The Princes being surprized and charmed with such a reception, were determined to wipe off their past disgrace by the most unexceptionable behaviour ; and after a short trial of their sincerity, the Monarch gave them appointments suitable to their rank, and the former commands which they had in the army.

In these posts of trust and honour the COLLA's continued for some years enjoying and meriting the Monarch's favour : But as these appointments were only temporary and each of the Princes had a family, the King recommended to them to consider of some provision to be made for their children, when they themselves should be taken out of the

world. He not only assured them that they might always depend upon his assistance, but he also offered them a number of his troops to effectuate any attempts which they should make in order to obtain a settlement for their descendents. The difficulty was to find out a country to which they had any pretence ; for they had no title to any possessions warranted by law, and they had no quarrel subsisting with any of the provincial sovereigns that could give a colour to a rupture with them. But as the heads of Princes are very fruitful of invention on such occasions, and their hearts make no resistance, it was soon recollected that the province of Ulster had formerly put a great indignity on their family, in the person of CORMAC one of their ancestors ; whose beard they had infamously burnt at a public feast, and whom they banished afterwards out of the province. This offence, it is true, was near an hundred years ago, in which neither the present King nor inhabitants of Ulster had any share ; and could not therefore in equity be made to suffer for it. But equity, we know, is seldom the law of Princes in their invasions ; and therefore it was determined to push for a conquest in that province.

This unjust expedition was no sooner determined than it was prepared for ; and the Monarch having furnished them with an army of seven thousand, which was joined by some Danonians out of Connaught, the COLLA's invaded Ulster. The King of that province, having had notice of the preparations that were made against him, was not entirely unprovided for his defence. As soon as the two armies met, a bloody battle ensued, which the close of day did not decide ; but the field was left to the three brothers. The next day the King offered battle again to the victors without success, and without being defeated himself. In this manner the

the contest continued for several days, 'till at last a ribble slaughter having been made of the King's troops, in which he fell himself, the remainder of his army immediately quitted the field, intending to save themselves by flight ; but were pursued with such fury and carnage by the victors, that scarce any of the provincial forces escaped the sword. Sated with this bloodshed, and intoxicated with their success, the COLLA's marched directly to Eamania the palace of the Ulster Kings ; which, as soon as they had plundered, they set on fire. In a people who intended the conquest of the province as a settlement for themselves and their posterity, the destruction of this palace—which the reader has been told in the Introduction, was the only piece of architectonical magnificence then in the island—which had subsisted almost seven hundred years, and which might be of the same use to them as to their predecessors, seems a strange infatuation ; and to be accounted for only by that savage fierceness inspired by blood and victory, which extinguishes or overpowers reason in the human mind. When the brothers had made a thorough conquest of the country, they divided it among them to their mutual satisfaction, and to the content of those who were their chief followers.

Whether any advantage was taken of the absence of the army of MUREDACH by some of his enemies, or whether this invasion of Ulster, which he had projected and insisted in, was repented by some of his subjects—as it is highly reasonable to suppose—we are not told ; we are at a loss, therefore, to account for his death in battle by the hands of COLBACH his successor, of the Irian line, after a peaceful reign of five and twenty years. His death however was revenged in less than a year on COLBACH, by his son ACHY MOIMEDIN ; of whom we find

little more than that he held the monarchy for eight years ; that by a Welsh Princess which he had for a second wife, he became the father of NIALL, who will hereafter make a considerable figure upon the throne ; that he had a battle with the King of Leinster, and that he died at Tara.

CRIMTH.
II.
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A. D. 366

To this Monarch succeeded **CRIMTHAN**, of the line of **HEBER**, who enjoyed the crown thirteen years ; and who was memorable for his expeditions into Gaul and Britain, which paid him tribute, and from whence he brought several prisoners and a great booty. That Gaul and Britain were tributaries to the Irish Monarch may be justly doubted, I believe, if not denied ; and **KEATING**, who is the only historian that affirms it, affirms it on the authority of an ancient poem, which yet, from his own quotation of it, will not support his affirmation ; the poem only relating, as an instance of **CRIMTHAN**'s valour, " That the Britons and Gauls paid him homage and confessed his sway." The Picts indeed, had for a long time been tributaries to the Monarchs of Ireland ; and these **CRIMTHAN** took as his auxiliaries on this expedition ; but they paid dearly for the assistance which they had given him. For on the ravages committed by this Monarch in Britain, the Roman general, **THEODOSIUS** the elder, was sent thither to the assistance of their allies ; who routed and drove the Picts out of the Roman province, and having recovered all their plunder, delivered it to the proprietors. The enemy being thus retir'd beyond the two Friths, he fortified the neck of land which divided them ; and making a fifth province of the country they deserted, gave it the name of **Valentia**, in honour of **VALENTINIAN**, at that time Emperor.

It is probable, if **CRIMTHAN** had lived a little longer, that he would have revenged the cause of his allies the Picts ; for it is on all sides allowed, that
the

the Irish were at this time some of the best troops in Europe. But the Monarch's sister, as all historians agree, being ambitious to put the scepter into the hands of her favourite son, gave her brother a cup of poison ; which, in order to prevent any suspicion, she first tasted herself, but tasting of it too largely, she fell into the snare she had laid, and perished by it, as well as CRIMTHAN. But notwithstanding all the historians agree in this circumstance of his death, I must not conceal that it is somehow or other an evident blunder. They tell us that this sister was the first wife of ACHY MOIMODIN, by whom she had this favourite son, and whom CRIMTHAN succeeded on the throne : They also tell us, that she died before her husband ; and yet, by this account, she must either have survived him thirteen years during the reign of CRIMTHAN ; and must have been the second instead of the first wife of ACHY ; or else it is impossible that she could thus have poisoned her brother. A mistake there is somewhere, it is very evident ; and to me it appears probable, it is in placing her as the first, and not as the second wife of the former Monarch ; because the sons of the first Queen, as CRIMTHAN had no issue, would probably be preferred before those by the second ; and NIALI, who succeeded, they all allow to have been the son of ACHY, by his Queen, a British Princess.

NIALI, afterwards distinguished by the name of the " Nine Hostages," of the old Heremonian line, was no sooner in possession of the throne of his ancestors, than he sought to carry the terror of his arms abroad, and to prove himself worthy of his great descent. The first occasion which he had given him for it, was to assist their brethren the Dalriada in Albania, against the ravages and incursions of the Picts. When the King arrived in that country, he changed its name to Scotia Minor, at the request of the Dalriada's themselves ; in order

NIALI I.

D. 379

der to preserve their origin and descent from Ireland, then as often called by the name of Scotia Major. Indeed so many colonies of the Irish invaded Albania from time to time, and obtained possessions and settlements in that country, that it would be endless to recite them all; from whence it appears that the principal of the Scottish families were originally descended from the ancient Irish; to whom they owe the nobility of their blood, and the lustre and eminence of their families. To confirm this, I will quote the testimony of their own historian BUCHANNAN, in the room of several others that might be produced to the same purpose: "Since the natives of Ireland, and the colonies sent from thence into Scotland, were originally called Scots, in order to distinguish between the Irish and these Scots, they began to call those transplanted Irish by the name of Albanian-Scots." Must we not conclude then, that a history of the ancient state of Ireland is necessary for understanding the history of the Scots? Must we not conclude farther, that these people are of all others—except the natives of the ancient stock—the most concerned in the vindication of the letters, polity, laws, and military glory of Ireland before the conquest? I think we must. But I shall now return to the history.

In the ninth year of the reign of NIALL, he transported a numerous army into Scotland, in order to be joined with the forces of that country, and with the Picts whom he had reconciled; and marching this formidable body into Britain, they devastated the country in a most horrible manner. From hence he carried them into Armorica, now called Brittany; where they plundered the inhabitants, and made a prey of two hundred children of some of the best families in that province, which they brought home with their other spoil. Among these, it is said, was PATRICK, afterwards the
great

great Apostle of the Irish, then sixteen years of age; and it was a custom of the Irish to bring away captives from the places which they invaded, as witnesses of their success, and to grace their triumph. NIALL, being encouraged by the number of his captives, and the success of his arms in France, resolved upon a second expedition; but not thinking his own army sufficient of itself for such an enterprise, he concerted measures with the general of the Scots, to join him upon the Gallic coast, and to share the invasion and the plunder with the Irish. All the preparations being made, his eager troops embarked on board the transports; and having a fair wind, they were in a few days landed near the banks of the river Loire in Gaul. Here the general of the Dalriada's, now called Scots, found their ally; and the two armies being joined, they committed hostilities so dreadful, that the inhabitants were obliged to forsake their houses and their effects, and to flee into woods and caves, to avoid the cruelty of the invaders.

Whilst the two armies were thus iniquitously employed, the end of NIALL, who commanded them, was approaching in a manner that he little thought of. But in order to explain this to the reader, it is necessary that I should go a little back in his history. The son of a King of Leinster, perceiving that NIALL did not occupy the palace at Tara at his first mounting the throne, as all his predecessors usually did, and being a Prince of great ambition, and perhaps thinking it might pave the way to the throne itself, he took it in his head, without any knowledge or consent of NIALL, to possess himself of the royal palace. A week or more passed before the Monarch had any notice of this invasion of his property by ECHAD the Prince of Leinster; nor was it till after many disputes and skirmishes that the invader would relinquish his possession.

possession. But what greatly aggravated his offence, and encreased the resentment of the Monarch against him, was his murdering the son of a favourite Druid of NIALL's, for some slight affront, whilst the Prince was entertained at the father's house, and even in his sight. After this he made his escape to Scotland, where he lived in exile till this expedition into Gaul.

Whether he meditated a revenge on NIALL at the time that he desired the general of the Scots to let him have a command, or whether the Monarch's behaviour afterwards suggested the thought of it, we are not informed. Be this then as it may. As he was a Prince of a royal house, and an intimate acquaintance of GABRAN's the chief commander of the Scots, he had no difficulty in being appointed to go on this expedition; nor was the General wanting in a warm recommendation of him to the forgiveness of the Monarch. But all his interest with NIALL availed nothing: the King was so much incensed against the Prince of Leinster, that instead of receiving him into favour, he would not hear of him, nor suffer him to be in his presence. It is probable that this inveteracy might first inspire him with the design which he soon found means to execute. Perceiving the Monarch sitting on the banks of the river Loire, as the troops were one day ranging about the country; he got under the cover of a grove on the opposite shore, and discharging an arrow at the Monarch, shot him dead upon the spot. The expedition being totally disconcerted by this accident, so favourable for the inhabitants, the armies reembarked, and returned home to their different countries.

Thus ended the great exploits and life of NIALL of the nine hostages; a name given to this Monarch, it is said, because he brought away hostages from so many different regions. But this must not be understood

understood of so many different countries, but of so many places in which his arms had been successful; as Pictland, England, Wales, Armorica, and other parts of Gaul. The posterity of this King appropriated the Monarchy in a manner so much to themselves, that almost all the following Monarchs of Ireland were descended from him; besides many families of great renown, and many powerful Princes in them. He had pushed the glory of his subjects higher, and extended it further abroad, than any King of Ireland had done before him; and he had a peaceful reign at home of twenty-seven years to do it in. But his death is a lesson to Princes and great men, that they should not be implacable in their resentments; which may be always returned upon them to their own destruction. For the life of the greatest is in the power of the meanest man, if he is wicked and resolute enough to take it.

When the army brought home the news of the DATHY. Monarch's assassination, DATHY grandson to ACHY Moimoduin was elected to the throne, as being a A. D. 405 Prince of the Heremonian line. He is said to have governed the kingdom three and twenty years: and yet no other account is given than of his marriages and his descendents, except that pursuing his conquests in Gaul where his arms had been very successful, he received his death by a thunderbolt near the foot of the Alps, and his body was brought home by his men and interred in Ireland. This being the last of the Pagan Monarchs before the introduction of Christianity, we are now arrived at the end of the second age, which I have called the Obscure; and it naturally puts a period to this book.

Obscure however as it is allowed to be, yet I have taken such care to select the authentic from the fabulous part of its history, as that I persuade myself

myself there are no impositions upon the reader in this work. So far from delivering impossible tales, either to amuse and surprize the credulous, or throw a lustre and antiquity over the Irish history, here is nothing but what is possible at least ; nothing indeed but what is probable, if we judge of this history, with the same candour and impartiality as we do of all the histories of other ancient nations: and why Ireland, which is a member of our own dominions, should not meet with the same fairness of mind from English criticks which they shew to Greece and Rome, to China or to Russia, is a matter of just astonishment. I am afraid it is to be placed only to the account of pride ; that since we in England have no certain history before the invasion of the Romans, we will not allow that a people subject to us, and originally transplanted from us, shall in this respect be superior to ourselves. If it is not pride, which hath occasioned our partiality against the Irish history, it must be a childish prejudice of education, which it is time for us to lay aside ; and which though no wise men will acknowledge, yet the wisest men are not always free from. But whatever may be the fate of this history, it is certainly very shameful, to be learned in the accounts of other countries, and to be ignorant of those which belong to our own.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.